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Wednesday May 13 1998

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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Where did Anita Roddick go wrong?

How the Body Shop dream dissolved



G2 with European weather

Film festival special

Derek Malcolm's advice to the Cannes jury...



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Society

Politics and the vanishing nomads

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Soros bets $8bn on fall of pound

Financier launches new attack on sterling

Alex Brummer and Jill Treanor

GEORGE Soros, the international financier dubbed "the man who broke the Bank of England", could make an estimated $2 billion (£1.25 billion) from a new bet against the pound, according to sources in the City.

Mr Soros, whose Soros Fund Management firm is based in New York, is thought to be betting on sterling rejoining the exchange rate mechanism, as a prelude to joining the 11 countries which have adopted the euro.

The trader and fund manager is understood to have taken his sterling position on March 31, the day the pound reached its peak against the German mark, hitting 3.1090 — the highest level in 8½ years.

Since Mr Soros placed his $6-$8 billion bet against sterling rising any further it has tumbled 7 per cent on the foreign exchanges, with much of the fall coming after the May Day weekend when the decision on the euro was taken by the European Union countries.

The pound's sharp and disorderly fall, somewhat too rapid for the comfort of the authorities, comes none too soon for the Chancellor Gordon Brown who has been besieged since his March budget with complaints that his economic policies of high interest rates and a tight fiscal stance have contributed to sterling's surge since Labour took office.

Derivatives brokers estimated last night that Mr Soros's funds may make as much as $2 billion as a result of a recent strategy which involved buying the pound close to its recent highs against the German mark and then instigating a series of trades using options.

These complex financial instruments — widely used by sophisticated investors — allow him to sell at a lower level in three and six months time.

According to the Wall Street Journal Europe, Soros Fund Management recently bought put options which give the right but not the obligation to sell sterling and buy German marks at DM2.65 and DM2.70.

Derivatives brokers say these options trades make money as sterling falls.

This is particularly the case if reports are confirmed that Soros was the unidentified US investment institution which was active in the foreign exchange markets when sterling hit its peak at the end of March.

Since then, sterling has fallen to last night's level of DM2.89.

"You'd be buying puts if you'd bought sterling at a higher level," one City analyst said yesterday

"You could then sell it a cheaper level, making a profit."

A derivatives broker said that if Mr Soros is punting on sterling trading at DM2.65-DM2.70 marks in coming months, he may be part of the school of thought — shared by many in the City — that sterling will rejoin the exchange rate mechanism at DM2.70 ahead of participating in the single European currency in 2002.

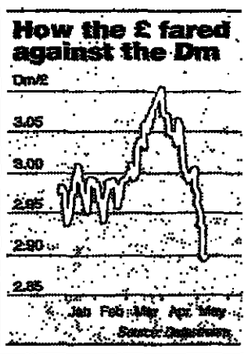
In the forward sterling market, sterling five years ahead is already selling at DM2.70, the rate which many City experts believe might be the correct one for the UK to join the single currency.

However, the presence of Mr Soros in the market may, ironically, mean that sterling could reach this level much more quickly, putting pres-

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City Notebook, page 12

How the £ fared against the Dm



Cook rebuffs Tories over arms to Africa

Michael White and Richard Norton-Taylor



Robin Cook yesterday . . . told MPs he could find no evidence of involvement by his officials in any kind of conspiracy PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

DOWNING Street last night rejected Conservative demands for a public inquiry into the "arms to Africa" affair after an increasingly confident Robin Cook had made a categorical defence of the conduct of Foreign Office officials.

He denounced "wild allegations" made against them by British mercenaries involved in the Sierra Leone counter-coup. With the restored president of Sierra Leone, Dr Ahmed Kabbah, offering public support for the Government's version of events, ministers are increasingly convinced they have got the controversy under control after a week's allegations of hypocrisy or incompetence at the FCO.

In a rowdy Commons tussle with baying ranks of Tory MPs, the Foreign Secretary finally gave an unequivocal public endorsement of the conduct of diplomats and other FCO officials who had dealings with Sandline International before the firm played its controversial role in restoring Dr Kabbah's elected government to power in May.

Mr Cook told MPs he had found no evidence that the FCO's Africa Department had been involved in "any kind of conspiracy with Sandline or gave any prior approval to a breach of the [UN] arms embargo".

The word "prior" last night gave Tories hope that there is still plenty to hide.

Amid Labour cheers, Mr Cook declared: "The investigation which I have ordered will establish the truth. But in the meantime I have more faith in my officials than I have in Sandline."

That was enough to reassure most loyalists, though both Sandline and Michael Howard, the Tory foreign affairs spokesman, pressed home their charges of complicity, incompetence and laziness against Mr Cook and his deputy, Tony Lloyd.

In a letter to Mr Cook, Mr Howard cited the handy "precedent" of Sir Nicholas Phillips's investigation into the Tory-dominated BSE crisis — and Lord Justice Scott's inquiry into the arms-to-Iraq affair — to justify his call for an inquiry to be held in public.

That got the thumbs down. Downing Street signalled last night that the FCO inquiry, to be conducted by an independent judicial figure as soon as criminal investigations by Customs and Excise are over, will not be held in public. "We don't expect another Scott inquiry," a spokesman said.

Sandline, which last week revealed details of meetings with seven named officials before the succesful counter-coup — to restore what Downing Street now calls "the good guys" — is concerned to establish that it had official support.

In a terse statement after Mr Cook's comments, Sandline said that Lt Col Tim Spicer, an ex-Guards officer and director of the company, was co-operating fully with the criminal investigation set up by Customs after FCO officials alerted it to Sandline's activities.

Sandline further sought to discomfit the Government by insisting that the supply of arms to Ecomog, the Nigerian-backed west African forces that restored President Kabbah to power, was exempt from the UN embargo. Therefore, there was no question of FCO officials doing anything wrong by discussing the company's role with Sandline executives. By implication, Mr Cook was saying that Sandline too must be in the clear, the firm suggests.

That would not clear Mr Cook of having to square the Sierra Leone affair with his ethical foreign policy stance, or from charges of not being on top of his department — and not even reading his nightly red boxes, which contain vital papers. He vigorously denied that too.

Ken Wiwa, page 8; Leader comment, page 9

Ecclestone: I gave Blair £1m to keep taxes down

David Hencke Westminster Correspondent



Bernie Ecclestone: 'stood to gain from advertising ban'

BERNIE Ecclestone revealed last night that he gave a £1 million contribution to the Labour Party because Tony Blair promised to keep down top tax rates.

The Formula One motor racing boss, who pays £27 million a year in personal taxes, admits his real reasons for funding Labour in a private letter to Lord Neill, chairman of the independent inquiry into party funding.

The letter, released to the Guardian last night, attacks Lord Neill for advising the party to return the cash after the row about the successful lobbying of Mr Blair over his proposed ban on tobacco sponsorship for Grand Prix.

"Perhaps the greatest irony of this affair is that I stood to gain substantially from an outright ban on tobacco sponsorship," Mr Ecclestone says. "Since I share the TV income with teams and my costs would have increased only modestly even with a huge take-up in demand, I personally would have gained substantially from an immediate ban on tobacco sponsorship. If I was concerned with my own self-interest, I should have encouraged the British government to ban tobacco sponsorship on the shortest possible timescale."

On the tax issue he says: "I would like to emphasise that prior to my donation, Tony Blair, then Leader of the Opposition, was encountering some opposition from within the labour movement for his decision to retain a top rate of personal income tax at 40 per cent. Others apparently supported increasing it to 50 per cent or perhaps to the 60 per cent level that existed before 1988. I strongly welcomed Mr Blair's stand on this issue which was clearly unpopular with some of his party.

"As a substantial contributor to the Inland Revenue, I clearly have benefited from his decision. However, my contribution was made after the policy was decided by Mr Blair. I made my donation because I was impressed with Mr Blair's leadership of the Labour Party, and I wanted to reinforce his independence in a party substantially dependent on finance from trade unions."

Mr Ecclestone, who has given to the Tories in the past, also discloses he was furious with the election advertising campaign sanctioned by the then Tory chairman, Brian Mawhinney, to portray Tony Blair with demon eyes.

Mr Ecclestone still believes Lord Neill was wrong to advise Labour to return the money because of the press coverage it generated.

"Last November you stated that . . . the 'donation was entirely lawful and proper'. Despite this you advised the Labour Party to return the donation.

"This a problem as far as UK public opinion is concerned but it is a far more serious matter for my reputation overseas where I conduct 90 per cent of my business.

"News coverage abroad is frequently reduced to the simple assertion that I attempted to bribe the British government not to ban tobacco advertising in Formula One."

The Queen's new view of the Lord Chancellor

Clare Dyer Legal Correspondent

NOT long ago even his protégé Tony Blair might have been happy to see the back of the Lord Chancellor, what with his weakness for opulent soft furnishings, well-chosen Pugin wallpaper and ill-chosen words.

Now the Queen has achieved what even the most dedicated opponents of Lord Irvine — "Call me Cardinal Wolsey" — could not.

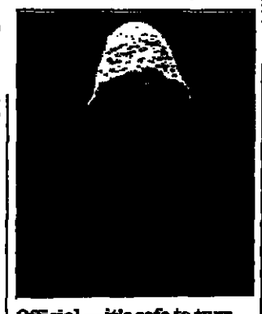
At the next state opening of Parliament, the Lord Chancellor will break with 450 years of tradition and show the Queen the back of his full-bottomed wig and gold-banded gown.

Her Majesty has agreed that the head of her judiciary and Speaker of the House of Lords should no longer risk skewering himself on the sword of state as he minces backwards down the steps to the throne after handing her her speech, an action that would probably breach the Health and Safety at Work Act if the Lord Chancellor were an employee.

Onlookers will no doubt mourn the passing of this most perilous moment in the ancient ceremony, when the Lord Chancellor faces the toughest challenge in the political and constitutional calendar. No Lord Chancellor in living memory has tripped up, but Lord Irvine has made something of a speciality of seeking out the banana skins in his first year in the Cabinet.

The move is the first step in Labour's plans to modernise the elaborate rituals of the 450-year-old ceremony which is seen as ill-suited to the modern image of Britain that Labour wants to promote.

One year observers thought Lord Mackay, Lord Irvine's predecessor, looked perilously close to the Queen's train, but he managed to skirt it skilfully. Lord Hailsham, an earlier Lord Chancellor, was given a dispensation from walking backwards because ill health affected his mobility.



Official — it's safe to turn one's back on royalty

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Oxfam urges UN to act against Germany, Italy and Japan ☐ Agency accuses three Western countries of violating children's rights

Three in the dock over debt poverty

Larry Elliott
Economics Editor

THREE of the West's richest nations — Germany, Japan and Italy — are being taken to the United Nations by Oxfam after the development agency accused the trio of following hardline debt policies detrimental to children in the world's poorest nations.

Stepping up the international campaign to free nations of their excessive debt burdens, Oxfam says the three countries — together with the International Monetary Fund — should be forced to account publicly for their anti-child policies. The development agency is arguing that the squeeze on health and education spending imposed by Germany, Japan and Italy's debt policies put them in clear contravention of the *UN Convention on the Rights* of the Child.



It is now urging the UN to investigate the actions by the governments of Germany, Japan and Italy. Oxfam is demanding that the three — together with Michel Camdessus, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund — should be summoned to the UN to explain their debt policies.

In particular, Oxfam says that the IMF and the three countries should justify how their resistance to speeding up debt relief under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative squares with obligations under the convention.

Oxfam, which is part of a coalition of churches, think tanks and development agencies pressing for the burden of debt to be eased, has written to Kofi Annan, the UN secretary general, indicting Germany, Italy and Japan for "systematically undermining the HIPC initiative".

Although the UN could not impose any penalties on the countries accused by Oxfam, the move is certain to cause huge embarrassment to Bonn, Tokyo and Rome ahead of this weekend's Group of 8 summit in Birmingham where debt is high on the agenda.

Evidence presented by Oxfam to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child points out that — eight years after the World Summit on Children — countries such as Tanzania are spending less on primary education than on debt, and Ethiopia, where 100,000 children die each year from diarrhoea, is spending three times as much on debt as public health.

"The hard fact is that debt is costing children their opportunities for education and their lives," said Diana Melrose, policy director of Oxfam GB. "That is why the failure of creditors to provide adequate debt relief does not deserve to be discussed is such polite terms between finance ministers. Failure to remove the debt burden in Africa is a violation of child rights. The primary responsibility for these ongoing violations rests with countries such as Germany, Japan and Italy — and the IMF — who have collectively sought to delay and diminish the debt relief provided under the HIPC framework."

Stung by recent criticism, Germany and Japan insist their aid policies are among the most generous in the Group of Seven industrial nations. Oxfam said it accepted that Germany had done far more than most countries with regard to writing off bilateral debt, and that Japan had made an important contribution to a trust fund at the Asian Development Bank to help countries meet their debt repayments. However, the development agency said that its evidence showed that Germany, Japan, Italy and the IMF had sought to:

☐ Delay the provision of debt relief under the HIPC initiative for countries such as Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Mozambique.

☐ Block proposals — such as that brought forward by Britain last year — to provide earlier and deeper debt relief.

☐ Obstruct the adoption of measures, such as the sale of IMF gold stocks, aimed at providing resources to finance more effective debt relief.

Oxfam said that full implementation of HIPC would cost only $7 billion — equivalent to the start-up costs of Euro Disney, and a small fraction of the funds mobilised for the bail-out of Asian countries in the wake of last year's financial crisis.

"Given the relatively small sums involved, Germany, Japan, Italy and the IMF's role in stalling HIPC from one round of meetings to the next and prejudicing vulnerable children's future is all the more indefensible."

It added that the IMF — while not a signatory to the convention — had been pursuing similar policies to the three accused countries and these were inconsistent with its status as a specialised agency of the UN.

The New Slavery, page 5

Police open fire at demonstrators

Indonesian forces kill six student protesters

Andrew Higgins in Jakarta

THEY handed fresh flowers to riot police in the afternoon sun. But sheltering last night in the shadows of Trisakti University, a 22-year-old student of business management described what happened on the airport road into Jakarta.

"We were running back to the campus when the shooting started," he said. "I saw my friend shot in the back of the head, at the neck."

His friend, one of several thousand protesters gathered yesterday in Jakarta to denounce President Suharto, was dead. "I took his head and someone else held his feet. We carried him away."

By late last night the morgue of a nearby hospital held four more corpses, the first student fatalities in three months of escalating youth protests against the ailing, 76-year-old president. Grieving relatives and friends wailed at bodies covered in white sheets.

> 'We were running back to campus when the shooting started. I saw my friend shot dead'

Reports early today said six had died in the violence.

After battling protesters across this country of 200 million with clubs, tear gas and British-made armoured water canons, security forces yesterday set out to kill. Switching to lethal force for the first time in the capital, they opened fire into the crowd with live ammunition and rubber bullets.

"They did not shoot at the sky," one student said. "They were shooting at people."

With President Suharto visiting Egypt, violence also erupted in other cities. His trip was intended as a show of disdain for his critics but has inflamed the worst economic and political crisis since he came to power in 1966. Yesterday's killings are likely to precipitate a potentially violent climax.

Police in Kupang, more than 1,000 miles east of Jakarta, fired tear gas and plastic-coated bullets at a crowd of demonstrators, who chanted: "Democracy is dead." There were also clashes in Bandung. But none matched the bloodshed in Jakarta.

A list drawn up by activists encamped in the rector's office at Trisakti gave the names of 20 wounded, seven from live rounds and one from rubber bullets.

A private college for the government and business elite, Trisakti last night seethed with angry, terrified youth, the main entrance under siege from riot police massed outside. Sixteen troop lorries lined the road, a main thoroughfare.

On the campus students darted between covered walkways. "They are shooting into my campus," said Awing, a youth in search of an exit unmanned by police. "They could not stop the people so they do this."

A conference room had been turned into a makeshift first aid centre. A student tended to the lightly injured with bandages and antiseptic. The more serious cases had been rushed to hospital.

The mother of one of the dead screamed near the body of her son: "Why did it happen to him?"

The mayhem ended what had been a large but peaceful protest outside Trisakti. Taking security forces by surprise, students had surged out of the college gates and blocked the main road.

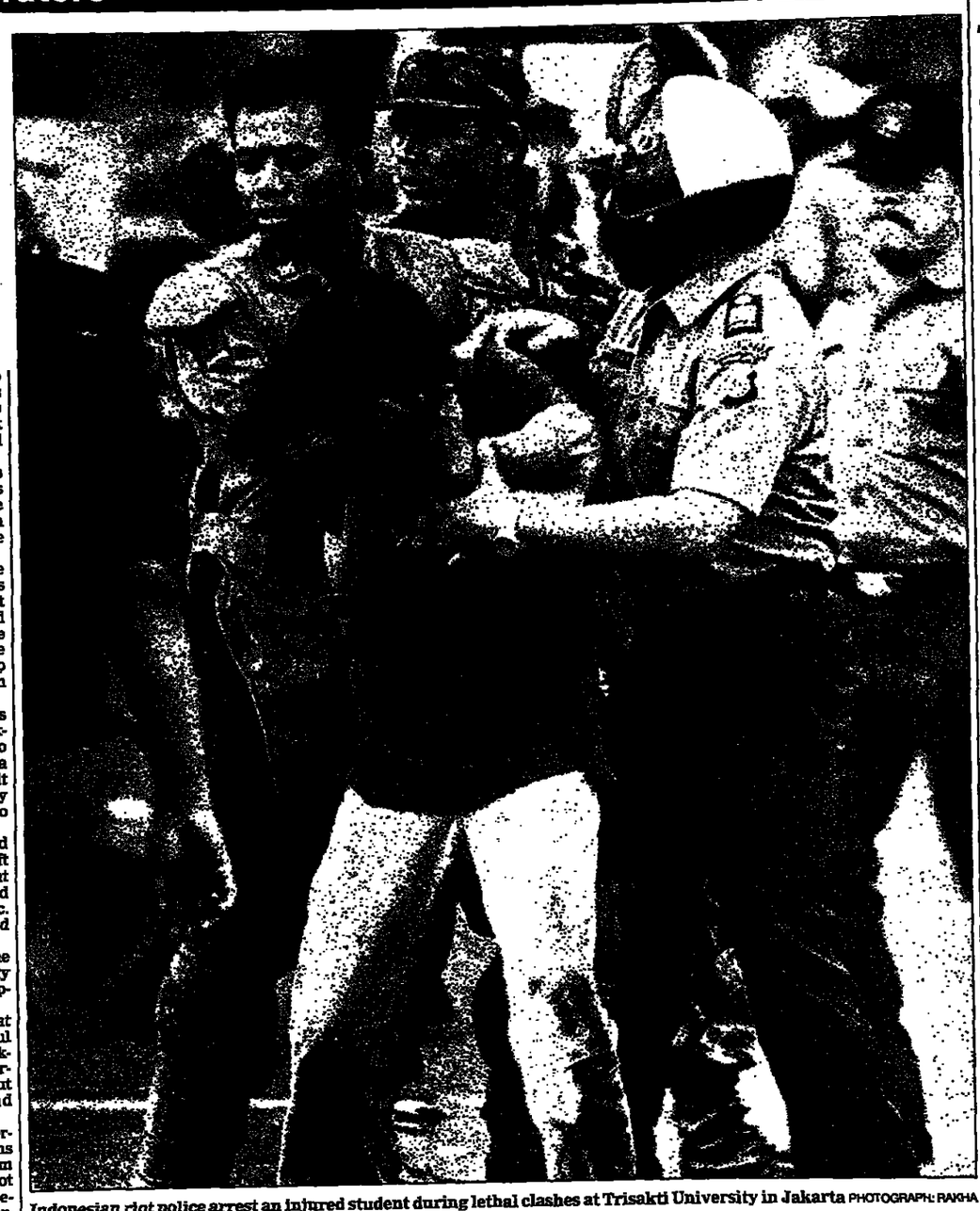
The government has tolerated campus demonstrations but had vowed to halt them spreading to the streets. Riot forces called in reinforcements, and negotiations persuaded students to retreat.

But the mood changed abruptly when police charged the retreating protesters, kicking and beating students, who were left bleeding on the road. The shooting started without warning or provocation, students said.

The bloodshed is a further blow to Indonesia's standing abroad at a time when it needs foreign help to rescue its crumbling economy, and the IMF is under pressure to reconsider its role.

Earlier yesterday, an opposition trade union marched to the IMF offices in Jakarta to demand that a $43 billion bail-out be delayed until the president accepts reforms.

Suharto old guard turns to students, page 6



Indonesian riot police arrest an injured student during lethal clashes at Trisakti University in Jakarta PHOTOGRAPH: RAKHA

US giant plans to patent key genetic codes

Paul Brown and
Martin Walker in Brussels

A UNITED STATES multinational company yesterday announced plans to unravel the entire human genetic code by 2001 and sell the information to scientific institutions and drug companies — patenting the most valuable gene sequences to protect its investment.

The announcement came on the day the European Parliament agreed a controversial European directive that allows companies to patent human, plant and animal genes and so charge royalties on medical or agricultural applications.

The US project, privately funded by the Perkin-Elmer Corporation of Norwalk, Connecticut, follows a technical breakthrough by the company which allows robot machines to plot the human gene sequences 10 times faster and more cheaply than previously thought possible. The company aims to make a profit by beating a federal effort to achieve the same results.

The company has teamed up with J. Craig Venter, a controversial figure who pioneered isolating gene sequences, patenting them and selling them to companies. He now heads the non-profit Institute for Genomic Research, in Rockville.

Tony White, chief executive officer of Perkin-Elmer, told the Guardian from New York: "We are not a philanthropic organisation, we have a revenue model for this. We are sure people will want to buy the information."

He said most of the information would be available to companies and scientific institutions on a pay-to-view basis on sophisticated websites. "We will of course have first access to the data and be able to evaluate it. If necessary we will patent 100 to 300 of the very significant genes, but we do not know yet. We will license those genes. We do not want to hold them hostage, we want to contract people for research."

He said there may be 60,000 to 100,000 genes in the human body, so only a tiny proportion would be patented.

The company will employ between 400 and 800 people to run 230 of the machines, which will decode information from human genes isolated from sperm and other cells. The electricity bill alone is expected to be £3,000 a day.

"We think this is the future of medicine. We will have a blueprint and match later with the blueprint of mice and other related mammals — the first stage in finding a cure for many common diseases," Mr White said.

The European directive was passed after intense lobbying by multinational pharmaceutical corporations, while Green MEPs protested against "bio-piracy".

The directive has been modified since the Parliament rejected an earlier bill three years ago, not least to include the provision that "the industrial application of a sequence or a partial sequence of a gene must be disclosed in the patent application".

This is designed to stop companies patenting everything from human, animal and plant genes in the hope of hitting a jackpot.

Willi Rothley, the German Social Democrat who proposed the directive, insisted yesterday that it would allow the patenting only of genuine inventions, not of gene sequences that exist naturally.

He said it was "clear that there can be no use of human embryos for commercial or industrial purposes, no human cloning, and the suffering of genetically modified animals is only permitted for medical purposes".

Magda Aelvoet, co-president of MEP Greens, said: "The bans on patenting human cloning and human embryos are poorly defined and will be wide open for exploitation by clever patent lawyers."

Compassionate, courageous study of chilling crime

Review

Lyn Gardner

Frozen
Birmingham Rep

WITH hysteria about paedophiles and child killers running high, Bryony Lavery's big, brave, compassionate play about grief, revenge, forgiveness and bearing the unbearable could not be more topical. At its heart are three people whose lives have become iced over by the terrible realities of disappearance, violence, rape and murder.

The grief-stricken Agnetha (Josie Lawrence), a criminal psychologist running away form America and the recent death of her long-time collaborator and lover, arrives in Britain to present her paper on the difference between crimes of evil and crimes of illness.

She is also here to study Ralph (Tom Georgeson), a convicted paedophile and murderer, one of whose many victims includes Rona, the 10-year-old daughter of Nancy (Anita Dobson). Rona went out one day to take the secateurs to her granny and never came back.

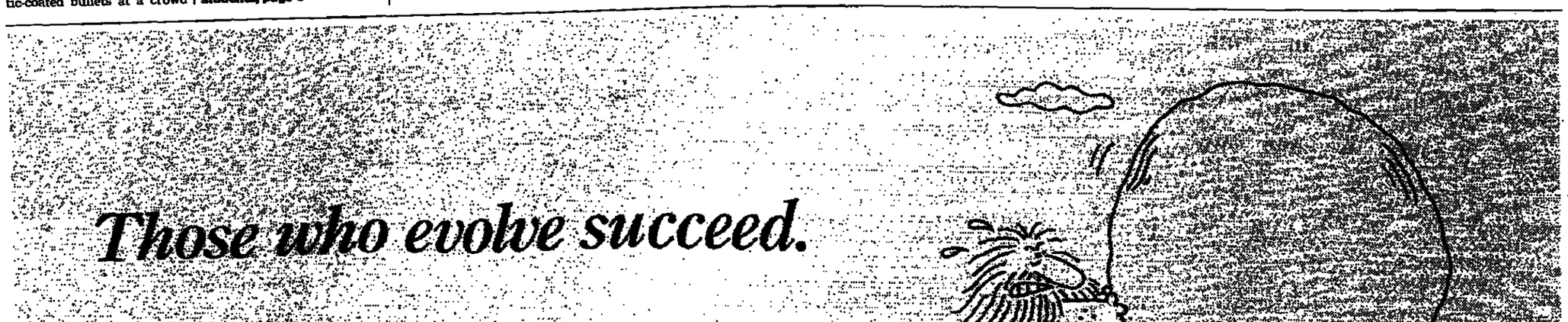
Spanning two decades, from 1976 to the present, and two continents, Lavery's play is largely written in intercutting monologues, a form which — although slightly wearing at two-and-a-half hours — deftly reflects the characters' frozen isolation and the way their lives unknowingly and coincidentally overlap.

Bill Alexander's starkly effective production, played on Ruari Murchison's white expanse of set like an Arctic wasteland, underlines this too: as Nancy blithely witters on in her suburban garden about the daughter that she doesn't yet know is dead, the sound of a plane roars overhead as if bringing Agnetha across the Atlantic 20 years too soon. Every now and again the action is punctuated by girlish laughter. The victim is never forgotten.

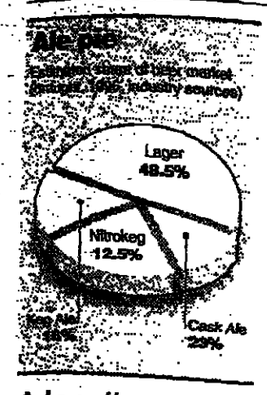
It is by no means a flawless evening. The distraught Agnetha is a pretty unconvincing character whose dramatic purpose is far too obvious; and if we are supposed to accept that Ralph's serial murders are symptoms, not sins, because the part of his brain that controls morality and human empathy has been damaged by childhood abuse, how come he suddenly appears to make a recovery complete enough to kill himself out of remorse?

These quibbles aside, this is a serious, provocative and thoughtful play about a rite of passage of people frozen in the past and facing up to the future with their courage to the fore.

None more so than Anita Dobson's Nancy, so obsessed with the dead that she cannot love the living, and whose handling of her 10-year-old daughter's skull is one of the most harrowing and hauntingly beautiful moments that I have ever witnessed in the theatre.



صكذا من الاصل



A leading brewer says young drinkers are deserting their former favourite and moving back to ale of the 'smooth flow' or 'Irish' variety such as Caffreys, the market leader. **Ian King** reports



The fashion-conscious 1990s drinker likes nothing better than a pint of 'smooth flow' ale, according to the Vaux brewing group

Trendy bitters leave lager ailing

Younger drinkers favour nitro-kegs

ONE of Britain's leading brewers yesterday predicted trendy new bitters will lead to the death of lager.

According to Vaux, the Sunderland-based hotel, pubs and brewing group, younger drinkers are moving away from lager and back to bitter. But not the cask beers that their grandfathers quaffed in the 1950s or, for that matter, the Watney's Red Barrel-style keg brews loved by their parents two decades ago.

Vaux said the fashion-conscious 1990s drinker liked nothing better than a pint of "smooth flow" ale, as advertised lovingly in those soft-focus commercials featuring, in the main, Irish couples.

Vaux, which apart from its own "smooth flow" brand, Lambtons, brews Carling Black Label and Heineken lager under contract for Bass and Whitbread respectively, said there were signs that younger drinkers were deserting lager.

Frank Nicholson, managing director of the group's pubs and brewing division, said younger drinkers enjoyed the "theatre" that came with the pouring of a pint of "smooth flow ale" and watching it settle.

He added: "The implication is that, by comparison, lager is rather boring. Nitro-keg [the industry name for smooth flow] is here to stay, and I think it will increasingly challenge lager. The younger generation is moving back to ale."

Vaux has just spent £2 million on renewing its sponsorship deal with Sunderland FC, whose players will advertise Lambtons on their shirts until 2001, continuing a 13-year tie-up — the second-longest in football after Manchester United's association with Sharp.

From a standing start less than five years ago, the nitro-keg market has exploded, and now nearly every major British brewing group produces its own "smooth flow" brand.

Guinness — whose famous black product uses a similar method — produces Kilkenny. Other brands include John Smith's extra smooth bitter from Scottish & Newcastle, Whitbread's Boddington Gold, and Tetley smooth bitter from Carlsberg-Tetley. The market leader is Caffreys, launched by Bass in March 1994, which has a 14 per cent share of the premium draught ale market. It sells 420,000 barrels a year.

Having seen Caffreys win awards from the drinks and advertising industries, Bass recently launched a £10 million advertising campaign to support the brand, this time using its perceived "Irishness" less blatantly.

However, nitro-kegs — which remain smooth by being conditioned in the keg with a mixture of nitrogen and carbon dioxide — are not to everyone's taste, with the Campaign for Real Ale particularly critical.

But Bass rejects suggestions that Caffreys is tasteless. A spokesman said: "Caffreys is not just the most preferred ale, it is the best tasting product, too. It was rated higher than all other standard and premium nitro-keg ales in blind tests."

A spokesman for Guinness Brewing said it did appear younger drinkers were switching from lager to "Irish ales".

He said: "Anecdotally, we are hearing that a lot of drinkers in their mid- to late-20s are looking for a change from lager, but are finding traditional bitters too challenging.

"Irish ales are a logical next step for them."

US company in talks to run schools for profit

John Carvel
Education Editor

AN American entrepreneur is in talks with the Department for Education and Employment about plans to take over the management of some of England's worst-performing schools and run them for a profit, government officials confirmed yesterday.

Although discussions are still at an exploratory stage, ministers are interested in how the private sector could introduce new techniques into schools failing to respond quickly enough to criticism from the Office for Standards in Education.

Benno C. Schmidt Jr, chairman of the Edison Project, said his company made a commercial return of up to 7 per cent on contracts with school boards in the US and had high success rates with previously under-achieving pupils.

It was proposing a similar arrangement in the UK where David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, is preparing to take powers to close persistently failing schools and reopen them with new staff and a fresh management.

Mr Schmidt said DfEE officials thought it would be legal for a private firm to take over management responsibility, possibly working with the local education authority or the Government.

"They have suggested that it might be possible to have failing schools join a national managed group of schools, run by a company such as Edison." The company would only be interested in involvement that guaranteed a return on its investment.

"On the whole, officials have been pragmatic about this. They want to know how it would work. They want to be sure there is no danger that the interests of children would be sacrificed. But they have not said that making a profit would rule us out.

"They have indicated that there are questions to be resolved. But I take it that we have been encouraged to try to find answers to these questions. We have no problem with the idea that we should not make excessive profits. We would be happy to take part in a system where there was a ceiling or a cap on the level of profits. But we could not be locked into an inflexible budget," he said.

A DfEE spokesman said: "No commitments have been given to any organisation, but we are always interested in new ideas from a range of public and private sector organisations that could help with the process of improving failing schools. We often talk to public and private sector organisations about a range of initiatives."

The department would not comment on reports that Mr Blunkett is preparing to use powers in the School Standards Bill to shut 41 schools that have been failing for more than two years. When the bill was published in November, he said that if local education authorities failed to turn round failing schools, the job could be given to others.

The Edison Project runs 25 schools in the US and is opening up to 20 more this autumn. Mr Schmidt said the company took over the Dodge School in Wichita, Kansas, in 1995 and turned a half-empty establishment with poor results and a demoralised staff into a thriving school with a waiting list of 1,500.

To achieve a quantum leap in performance, he said, schools required a programme of innovation covering the curriculum, teaching methodology, teacher training and access to technology and the best research.

The company has also expressed an interest in running education action zones in deprived areas. It is regarded by the teaching unions as possibly the most threatening of the private sector operators trying to enter the education sector.

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said: "I hope that officials at the DfEE are keeping their ministers informed about these discussions.

"We have a very clear commitment from the Secretary of State for Education that organisations will not be allowed to run schools for profit in this country. If taxpayers' cash has been set aside for the education of children, that is what it should be used for."

'Only portrait' of Joan of Arc found

Fresco may end guesswork over the face of France's patron saint

Jon Henley in Paris

A CHAPEL deep in the Vosges forest looks set to become a place of national pilgrimage after the discovery of a medieval wall painting that experts believe may be the only true portrait of Joan of Arc, patron saint of the French and scourge of their oldest enemy — the English.

"It has to be her," said Father Antoine of the bishopric of St Dié, in eastern France, which is responsible for the chapel at Joan of Arc's birthplace in nearby Domrémy, where the fresco was found.

"Everything fits — the painting is the right age, the house where she was born is 500 yards away, and we know from records of her trial and rehabilitation 20 years later that as a child and adolescent she prayed here every Saturday."

A culture ministry spokeswoman said the painting, to be revealed today, was recently dated to the first half of the 15th century. But she said it had not yet been authenticated as a portrait of the woman who was burned at the stake nearly 600 years ago.

The well-preserved, mainly ochre-coloured portrait shows a pretty teenager with round cheeks, a mass of blonde hair piled under a peasant headdress and piercing blue eyes, kneeling calmly between the arms of another local saint, Thiaut de Provins.

It was discovered a year ago, while workmen were unblocking a walled-up window, hidden beneath layers of lime applied to walls of the Notre Dame de Bermont chapel during a plague in the 16th century.



One artist's impression of Joan of Arc, at her death

"We said nothing at the time. We had to wait until the dating process was complete," Father Antoine said.

A national heroine for standing up to English oppression, Jeanne d'Arc, or the Maid of Orléans, was born in 1412, a farmer's daughter. Aged 16 and dressed as a man, she convinced the dauphin of France she had a divine mission to help him recover the throne. Her troops defeated the English at Patay in 1429, allowing the dauphin to be crowned. Captured the following year, she was treacherously turned over to the English and tried for heresy and witchcraft. After withdrawing the recantation she made at the end of a gruelling trial, she was put to death on May 30 1431, aged 19.

"Every other painting of her is a guess, because no contemporary portraits were thought to have been made," Father Antoine said. "But this one was painted during her lifetime, or very soon after her death, almost certainly based on the accounts of villagers who were her friends. We know, finally, what Sainte Jeanne really looked like."

Soros bets $8bn against pound

continued from page 1

sure on the Government to consider an earlier entry to the European single currency.

The fall in the pound since the start of May reflects the market's belief that interest rates in Britain have peaked at 7.25 per cent and could soon be on their way down.

Further evidence on the trend in interest rates will be disclosed later today when the Bank of England releases its latest Inflation Report — which will give the bank's judgment on future interest rates.

The fall in UK rates comes as there is a growing expectation that the Bundesbank in Germany may start to gradually tighten German rates, as part of the effort to bolster the reputation of the euro following the débâcle over the selection of the European central bank chief.

George Soros came to prominence as an extraordinarily skilful currency operator in September 1992 when he successfully anticipated the large-scale devaluation of the pound which bounced it out of the exchange rate mechanism along with the Italian lira and the Spanish peseta.

The Hungarian-born Mr Soros, who is a generous philanthropist in Eastern Europe, is known to have made at least $1 billion on his 1992 bears sales of sterling.

His actions contributed to the break-up of the exchange rate mechanism and destroyed the Conservatives' reputation for sound economic management.



George Soros . . . could make $2 billion from bet

Although they make up only about 5 per cent of Jordan's five million people, the Bedouin are politically important given the strategic sensitivity of their land.
David Pallister on the threat to a nomadic lifestyle

G2 page 12



but only enough food for one.
Which one do you feed?

When Meseret Nara gave birth to twins no one saw cause for celebration. She already had hungry mouths to feed. Two more was disaster.

Meseret was only too aware of what malnutrition means to a baby born into a shanty town: the baby dies. She had already lost a child in the first year of life and with one in three twins celebrating their first birthday alone, why should hers be any different?

Meseret was lucky. In Ethiopia Christian Aid supports an organisation that helps the poorest families cope with multiple births. Her family was put on an emergency feeding programme, given proper healthcare and eventually taught skills to enable them to go it alone. But for too many third world mothers there is no such help and nature takes its inescapable course.

Christian Aid works in over 80 different countries on a continuous basis. So should there be a crisis, such as the current situation in Sudan, we are already in a strong position to help.

This week is Christian Aid Week, please help us to prevent families having to face choices that are impossible to make. Fill in the coupon or call with a donation now. You'll be giving us an answer to our original question.

Please give now. Call
0345 000 300

Photography: Sue Cunningham

I enclose a cheque/PO made payable to Christian Aid for: £250* ☐ £200 ☐ £100 ☐ £25 ☐ Other £ _____
Or please debit my card. (Mastercard/Visa/Other specify) _____
Card No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Expiry Date _____ GWOOGU/05
Signature _____ Name _____
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Christian Aid Week. May 10 – 16.

CSP: £13.80. Tricast: £177.87.

Nicholls) Tote: £5.90; £1.20, £3.40, £2.10. Dual F: £19.80. Tric: £55.40. CSP: £39.66.

Bradford (Pk Ave): Yorkshire v Nottinghamshire.

front and a Jamie Smith penalty briefly tied it up at 3–3.

The Guardian INTERACTIVE

Jails to take softer line on cannabis

Alan Travis
Home Affairs Editor

PRISON governors are to be more lenient with inmates caught using cannabis under a government drugs strategy that will target heroin, cocaine and other opiate abuse inside Britain's jails.

George Howarth, Home Office minister, announced the new approach yesterday as research showed that 44 per cent of prison staff agreed that personal use of cannabis was "not detrimental to good order".

Mr Howarth said the shift in strategy did not mean the Government condoned soft drug use: "Prisoners who use cannabis are breaking the law and they will be treated accordingly, but we are reflecting the way the world is outside prisons. The law outside recognises that cannabis is a less serious problem than, for instance, heroin and cocaine."

The decision to focus on the more damaging kinds of drug abuse in prison will be accompanied by incentives and privileges for inmates who become "drugs free".

Home Office research published yesterday shows that the mandatory drug-testing programme, introduced in Britain's prisons three years ago, has had some success at deterring cannabis users but has made little impact on those using heroin, methadone, LSD and cocaine.

But it was also clear from the announcement that the spiralling prison population is partly behind the move to downgrade the punishment in jail for smoking joints. At present all prisoners who test positive face having 14 days added to their sentence. "The use of additional days is expensive, particularly at a time of high population pressure ... [they] amount to over 500 prisoner places per year," says the review paper, Drug Misuse in Prison. It suggests that cannabis offenders should face "measures which have a more immediate impact on their lifestyle".

Prison governors will also have to halve the number of inmates taking mandatory drug tests each month, from 10 to 5 per cent of each jail's population. A more frequent testing programme for heroin and other hard drug use will be funded instead.

A further expansion of the drug treatment programme — at present involving 60 of the 135 prisons in England and Wales — will also occur, along with monitoring of the success of each jail in tackling traffickers and dealers.

Home Office research published yesterday showed that of 148 prisoners interviewed, only 37 claimed they did not use drugs. Half of those who had used drugs said the mandatory drug-testing programme had changed their habits; 30 said they had stopped drug-use completely.

Researchers found no evidence that prisoners who once used cannabis were becoming established heroin users to avoid testing positive. Some inmates believe that heroin is less easily detected by the tests because it passes through the bloodstream more quickly.

The Government's altered drugs strategy was welcomed yesterday by drugs education groups and penal reformers.

"Evidence indicates that heroin and harder drugs are becoming much more the currency in prisons," said the Chief Inspector of Prisons, Sir David Ramsbotham.



Helen McKendry, with her husband Seamus, holding a family picture showing her mother PHOTOGRAPH: KELVIN BOYES

O'Brien warns of asylum 'shambles'

Alan Travis
Home Affairs Editor

MORE than 110,000 people will be awaiting expulsion from Britain within four years if the "complete shambles" of asylum policy is allowed to continue, Home Office ministers warned yesterday.

"That is a 747 flight a day," said Mike O'Brien, immigration minister. "That would clearly be a big problem."

He also disclosed to MPs that nearly half the 19,500 people awaiting removal from the country had gone underground. About 8,000 failed entrants are deported each year.

Home Office "snapshot" surveys also show that 17,000 people going through the asylum and immigration process are believed by officials to have absconded.

The disclosures before the Commons home affairs committee mark the first time that a Home Office minister has put a figure on the expected trend in deportations and on how many asylum applicants disappear.

Mr O'Brien used these estimates to warn that radical changes were needed in both the asylum and immigration systems, otherwise some "110,000 would be due in some way for removal by 2002".

The outcome of a detailed review will be published in July, but the minister made clear yesterday that the Government wants to speed up the system by curtailing appeal rights against deportation orders, by more use of detention to prevent absconding and by ending decision-making delays.

The alternative was the European system of internal border checks, with police knocking on doors to carry out identity checks, he said.

He said something would be done in July about the Conservative government's decision to withdraw social security benefits from most asylum seekers.

He described the "emergency food and subsistence programme provided by local authorities as "a shambles within a shambles" and unsustainable.

Mr O'Brien confirmed that families whose cases had not been settled within seven years of their applications could be considered for "exceptional leave to remain", but it was not automatic. He had kicked out someone who had been in Britain for more than 18 years because he believed the person had continually abused the system.

The Government argues that the system has been reduced to a shambles by the backlog of 51,000 cases waiting for a decision and a further 23,000 cases awaiting the outcome of an appeal.

Conservative MPs said the figures suggested that there were tens if not hundreds of thousands "lost out there", using education services, housing and the health service, "when they have got no right to be there at all".

An immigration official said some of the 17,000 cited as having absconded had "lost contact with the immigration service and will resurface".

Britain offered sweeteners for promise to join euro

Martin Walker
in Strasbourg

EUROPEAN officials are offering two inducements to lure Britain into making a swift declaration of intent to join the euro, which will greet the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, when he arrives in Strasbourg today to open the European parliament's debate on the new central bank.

The goal is to ensure that Britain would be able to join the single currency zone when the notes and coins of the new euro go into circulation in January 2002.

The message was sent to Britain by EU commissioners, who yesterday unanimously assured Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown that they would waive the two-year waiting period inside the exchange rate mechanism, as required by the Maastricht treaty, if Britain would announce that it was ready to join.

Mr Ashdown was also assured that "a way would be found" to bring Britain into the Euro-X committee, the economic policy-making body for Euroland, as the 11-nation zone using the single currency is now known.

Tony Blair fought a long, losing battle at the Luxemburg summit last year to fend off Britain's exclusion from the Euro-X group, which brings together the 11 finance ministers of Euroland. They alone will discuss the new currency's external relations, which include setting of exchange rates against other currencies and relations with US and Japanese authorities who run the dollar and the yen.

It was not clear whether the offers made by the EU Commissioners would be backed by the national governments. But Mr Ashdown called yesterday for a British declaration of intent to join, with a date set for a referendum and possible British membership as early as 2000.

"Events will push the Government down this path faster that they are prepared to admit, and I firmly believe they will be driven to hold the referendum before the next general election," he said. "They are being driven this way already, through pressures on the pound, on interest rates and shortly by the consequent loss of jobs".

Fischler raises hope of ending European ban on British beef

Peter Hetherington

HOPES of ending the two-year ban on British beef to the Continent were raised significantly yesterday by Europe's farm commissioner after two days of intense lobbying by the Ministry of Agriculture and a practical demonstration of meat safety on a Northumberland farm.

Following a positive report from a key scientific committee in Brussels, Franz Fischler said EU farm ministers would next month consider allowing limited exports based on a firm recommendation from the European Commission. "In principle we will present a proposal to lift the ban," he said after a meeting of the EU's agricultural council in Newcastle upon Tyne to discuss the way forward for European farming.

Any lifting of the ban to Europe would immediately raise further hopes that sales elsewhere overseas could begin later this year — giving a further boost to British farming.

Delighted farmers' leaders, who earlier met Mr Fischler and Britain's Agriculture Minister Jack Cunningham — who was chairing the council — said the comments heralded a breakthrough in their attempts to resume a trade which was worth over £700 million annually in 1995, the year before the ban.

The aim is to gradually resume exports of cattle born after August 1996 — a so-called date-based scheme — subject to stringent safeguards involving the tracking of all animals by computer in a soon-to-be introduced computer-based tracing system.

Such a system, already in use in Northern Ireland, means that limited exports from Ulster will probably begin later this month or early in June.

After a peaceful protest by 100 farmers outside the conference centre in Newcastle Ben Gill, president of the National Farmers' Union, said he was extremely hopeful that the date-based scheme could be operational by autumn at the latest. "Commissioner Fischler expressed satisfaction with the BSE control measures being undertaken in Britain," he added. Dr Cunningham, who earlier escorted his fellow ministers around a Northumberland beef farm, said they had demonstrated that British beef was safe and reliable.

During the farming demonstration, EU ministers were clearly impressed with a system that traces the movement of cattle from birth to slaughter and then the butcher.

While Ireland has been Britain's principal ally in calling for a lifting of the ban, the Dutch agriculture minister, Jozias van Aartsen, said he was satisfied with the safety measures now in force. British officials said other EU states were also on board, with Germany lukewarm as it gears up for a general election later this year.

"But we are now convinced we have won all the scientific arguments and any opposition now will be purely political," said one. "We are more confident than ever."

Family's plea to IRA over fate of mother

John Mullin reports on a campaign to find the bodies of 14 people abducted by terrorists

HELEN McKendry is due to become a grandmother at the age of 40 next week. It will be a time of celebration when her daughter Kelly-Anne, aged 19, has her baby, but, as always at family events, there will be someone missing: her mother.

Jean McConville, who had nine children besides Helen, was 37 when she was abducted by the IRA just before Christmas 1972. She never returned. She is one of Northern Ireland's so-called disappeared, and today a government report on the victims of paramilitary violence will call on the IRA to say where they buried Mrs McConville and 13 other people they are believed to have killed.

The IRA kidnapped a dozen women in west Belfast at that time, suspecting one of them had helped two double agents. The others were allowed back to their families after questioning.

Mrs McConville was never to go home to the family's four-bedroomed maisonette in the Divis flats. All that was given to her children, soon to be taken into care, was her purse, with the few shillings she had in it, and her three rings.

Mrs McKendry, along with her husband, Seamus, aged 40, has fought for the truth for a quarter of a century. In 1995 they formed a group called Families of the Disappeared, and two years ago they were forced to leave their home in west Belfast after receiving death threats.

Mrs McKendry has been told that something went wrong while the IRA was interrogating her mother with a plastic bag over her head. She is believed to be buried in the Falls Road area.

Mrs McConville was born a Protestant. She married a British soldier and took his Catholic religion. He quit the army in 1964, becoming a builder.

When the troubles erupted, loyalists burned the family out of their home in east Belfast. They lived in refuge centres for months before getting their new home in republican west Belfast. Mrs McConville, perhaps because of her roots, was never quite accepted.

A few nights before her abduction in December 1972, she had cradled a dying British soldier in her arms, saying a prayer for him. That night "Brit Lover" was daubed on the wall outside her flat.

The previous January her husband had died of cancer; two months later her eldest boy, Robert, aged 17, had been interned in the Maze prison. Mrs McConville suffered a nervous breakdown, and was in hospital for months. She never fully recovered, and there were more woes that year. Billy, one of her twins, then aged six, lost a kidney through illness. Helen, 15, suffered a broken leg when she opened the door during an army raid.

Mrs McConville got out of the house twice a week to play bingo at the community hall. Just after the "Brit Lover" incident, a woman arrived one night and said one of her children had been in a road accident. She offered to drive Mrs McConville to the hospital, but when she got in the car, she was pushed to the floor and taken to a derelict house on the Falls.

She escaped that night, badly beaten and in severe shock. She said to her family only that she had been asked questions about matters she knew nothing about, and refused to go back to stay with her mother in east Belfast.

Mrs McKendry says: "The next night, she sent me out to get chips for the kids. I was gone maybe 30 minutes. She had been about to get into the bath, still in pain from her beating. Four women and eight men, masked apart from one girl who I was to see every day for years afterwards, burst in, saying they were from the IRA.

"My brother Arthur, then 16, tried to go with them, but they held a gun to his head. We were the eldest at the house, and our first reaction was to go to the police. We didn't, because we thought it might put all our lives in danger."

After six weeks, Mrs McKendry told her story to the civil rights movement, and it appeared in its newspaper. The next day, police, journalists and the social services descended on them. The family was taken into care, was split up, and has never been close since.

Mrs McKendry says: "It was bad enough for me. But at least I had known some family life. The younger ones had known nothing of it. Some of them have got into trouble; others have problems forming relationships. It ruined us.

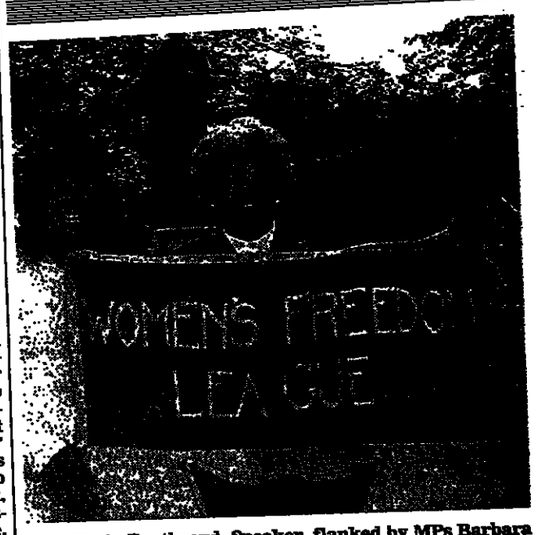
"The IRA put it about that our mother had run off with another man. Another story had her starting a new family on the Shankill Road. But she had had a hysterectomy.

"I hoped that she had been ordered out of Belfast and had lost her memory in some hospital in England.

"It was when Anne, my mentally handcapped sister, died of a heart attack in 1992 that I finally faced up to the fact our mother was dead. I was Anne's legal guardian, and she came home to our house. She looked so much like my mother as she lay in her coffin. She was about the same age.

"It makes me angry that our family was ripped apart. Never a day goes by when I don't think about my mother. She had a really hard life, and I still miss her. It would mean everything to me if the IRA could tell us where she is.

"I don't want revenge. All I want is to be able to give her a decent funeral. She deserves that."



1998: Betty Boothroyd, Speaker, flanked by MPs Barbara Follett and Clare Ward, celebrating the library lottery grant with a 1908 suffrage banner PHOTOGRAPH: FIONA HANSON

Lottery £4m opens door to library of women

Sarah Hall

IN THE flood-damaged basement of a London university, the world's oldest, and arguably most comprehensive, archive of women's history lies hidden from public view.

Wrapped in tissue paper or stowed away in archivists' boxes, the priceless collection in the Fawcett Library at London Guildhall university, east London, is glimpsed by fewer than 10 people daily, mostly academics. It charts the role of women in society since the Jacobean period.

But yesterday plans were announced to build a National Library of Women, funded in part by a £4.2 million lottery grant.

Due to open in October 2000, the four-storey library, to be built behind the Victorian facade of a derelict Grade II listed wash house in Old Castle Street, Tower Hamlets, will be around seven times larger than the collection's current location and should cater for around 70,000 people yearly.

An exhibition hall, conference facilities, cafeteria and education area will be incorporated, and exhibits will be accessible on the Internet.

The library, which will cost £8.65 million, aims to "record and celebrate the contribution of women" in shaping the modern world. With 60,000 books, hundreds of archives and more than 1,000 artefacts, it will chart women's developing position in society from the late 16th century through the fight for votes to the struggle for the ordination for women priests.

Treasures on show will include letters written from prison on toilet paper by suffragettes to their children and the return train ticket to the Derby racecourse bought by Emily Wilding Davidson, who died after throwing herself under the king's horse.

"Conduct" books from the 1600s and private papers of the Pankhursts and Virginia Woolf will be exhibited, as will banners of the suffrage movement and first editions of writers such as 17th century playwright Aphra Benn and early feminist Mary Wollstonecraft.

The library, which will be built behind the Victorian facade of a derelict, would not only allow such treasures to be kept in environmentally appropriate conditions, but would also give the collection the space to grow, said Maureen Castens, the Fawcett Library's director.

The Heritage Lottery Fund said the Fawcett collection — founded in 1926 as the library of the London Society for Women's Service, Dame Millicent Fawcett's non-militant suffrage movement — was an ideal candidate for funding.

"It is an excellent example of preserving and maintaining a fascinating area of the heritage for future generations, while increasing physical and intellectual access to the collections," said Anthea Case, the fund's director.

The university will have to find the remaining £4.45 million to build the library.

Brown's Ulster fund is 'no bribe'

John Mullin
Ireland Correspondent

THE Chancellor, Gordon Brown, yesterday denied that his £315 million package of spending measures and tax relief to bolster Northern Ireland's economy was a bribe to entice voters to back the Good Friday agreement. He called it, instead, "a framework for prosperity".

His announcement, nine days before the referendum, has been welcomed by business leaders.

Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, and Mr Brown, will shortly head an economic mission to the United States, visiting 10 cities to drum up investment. Mr Brown said: "The investment is not contingent on voting one way or another, but it will work only if there is stability. Business can expand if there is stability, but that means both economic stability and political stability."

But Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, was furious at the timing of Mr Brown's intervention. He labelled it a con trick designed to buy a Yes vote in next Friday's poll. "He is saying that the money will come, anyway. But if the people vote No, then it won't do much good. It's a bribe."

The Government's push to secure a Yes vote continues today when Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, former head of the civil service in Northern Ireland, outlines his recommendations for the victims of paramilitary violence. Tony Blair will tomorrow make his second visit to Northern Ireland in eight days.

There are fears, though, about the undecided in the Unionist camp. Lord Molyneaux, the former leader of the Ulster Unionists, is expected to deliver another blow to David Trimble, his successor, when he announces his opposition to the deal this week.

Mr Brown's package includes a £150 million investment fund. It will finance tourism schemes, a research and development programme, six key road projects, and a new science park at Queen's University, Belfast. It also provides £65 million for an employment and skills fund — allowing £42 million to extend the Government's New Deal scheme to help people over 25 and without a job, and £9 million for the sick and disabled. There is also £14 million to support a skills fund offering 100 per cent tax relief to small and medium firms on first-year capital costs. The sum far exceeds the £150 million recently envisaged.

Chris Gibson, the CBI's Northern Ireland chairman, said that the package would provide a worldwide platform for prosperity. "We have to ... convince people we are open for business," he said.

هكذا من الاصل

صكذا من الاصل

Global institutions make big strides in clearing debt ☐ Some Western countries still reluctant

Relief the world can bank on

Alex Brummer
Financial Editor

IN AN eloquent gesture, designed to underpin development in Uganda — the first of the poorest countries to receive some debt forgiveness — the World Bank advanced the government of President Yoweri Museveni a grant of $75 million this month to support universal primary education across the country.

The move demonstrates just how far the global financial institutions, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, have moved in their willingness to help relieve debt. It provides tangible evidence to other nations taking the complex debt relief route that there are clear economic and social benefits. It also underlines the need to keep the Bank and the Fund well resourced, if the ambitious goals for wiping out debt demanded by the Jubilee 2000 campaign are to be met.

At Lancaster House last Saturday finance and foreign ministers from the richest industrial countries and Russia made it explicitly clear, for the first time, that the target of clearing up to 20 of the world's poorest countries of some $250 billion of international debts by the year 2000 had been adopted as policy — providing the countries concerned have embarked on necessary economic reforms.

To further advance the process the G8 heads of government meeting this weekend in Birmingham, chaired by Tony Blair, are expected to announce the extension of the process to post-conflict countries such as Rwanda.

The effort to make proper inroads in reducing the debt burden of the poorest countries has made great strides since it was first seriously addressed in 1995. At that time the World Bank and IMF, the main sources of cash, were themselves seen in the development community as one of the sources of poverty. The high priority the two institutions gave to the repayment of loans and interest deprived poor countries of income that could have been spent elsewhere.

This insistence that concessional loans and aid granted by them take a chunk out of national budgeting meant that resources earmarked for vital health, education and water projects in countries across Africa from Uganda to Niger were spent on paying off mortgages on the past. These debt accumulations among poor nations, at their highest in Mozambique where public debt reached $5.5 billion, are the results of decades of problems, from famine and falling commodity prices to civil strife and corrupt governance.

But it was a titanic struggle to create a mechanism for wiping out debt that would satisfy both the Bank and IMF's shareholders among the richest countries, and silence the critics among the NGOs — non-government organisations such as Oxfam, environmental groups and aid concerns. Britain, France, the US and Canada were big public supporters of the idea. But Germany, Italy and Japan were reluctant participants, fearing that any such scheme would weaken the financial credibility of the World Bank and IMF and also expose the world to the dangers of what financiers call "moral hazard": if countries, like individuals, know that their debts may never have to be repaid, it will encourage them to borrow and spend the proceeds irresponsibly.

It was to meet these objections that the plan for relief of the multilateral debt — the Highly Indebted Poorest Countries initiative (HIPC) — was created in 1996 with very high hurdles. Only poor nations that had demonstrated a willingness to reform their affairs would be entitled to debt forgiveness, and it would not be given easily. To qualify they would have to follow an agreed pattern of reforms, including budgetary austerity — restricting public spending to only the essentials — for at least three years: the decision point. Governments of poor countries would have to show a proven track record of budgetary reform and sound government to qualify.

Even this was not enough: they would require a further three years of austerity before reaching the completion point, at which most of the debt wipeout would take place. Under these terms it would have taken most of the 20 poorest countries well beyond the millennium to reach completion point.

This toughness was seen as satisfying the political needs of the dissenting Western governments as well as the austerity instincts of the IMF. Moreover, the level of debt relief would be strictly limited using a complex formula based on the poor nation's export performance.

Despite all the caveats, HIPC is a huge advance. For the first time, the World Bank and IMF recognised that debt relief was a vital objective — not a danger to the financial system.

To speed up the debt relief plan, Commonwealth finance ministers at their annual meeting in Mauritius last year proposed that three-quarters of the poorest countries should qualify for debt forgiveness by 2000. Since then HIPC has gathered political speed and several of the obstacles, built in the early, cautious days of the scheme are melting away.

In his report to finance ministers in Washington last month the plan's architect, World Bank president James Wolfensohn, announced that in addition to Uganda, debt relief packages had been approved for Guyana and Ivory Coast, with Mozambique also over the hurdles. The World Bank is considering debt relief schemes for at least 10 countries.

The battle is now on to bring a further five countries to decision, if not completion point, by accelerating the process between now and 2000, as demanded by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor. But the German authorities remain reluctant to provide the funding to the IMF for this programme and have blocked the sale of IMF gold to help pay for it. The Italians are following Bonn's lead, as are the Japanese.

The US administration which, like Canada, publicly supports the scheme — especially since President Clinton's high-profile visit to Africa last month — is split over the issue. The US Treasury is reluctant to hand over cash until it has seen that the countries have demonstrated they are genuine reformers interested in free markets. Russia, although a newcomer to the process, demonstrated its willingness to help in Mozambique, where it held most of the bilateral debt. It is also aware that it has received enormous help from the West in easing its own debt legacy.

The World Bank/IMF scheme has offered a strong beginning on debt relief. The momentum has picked up substantially in the run-up to Birmingham. But it will only progress if the political will and determination can be sustained.

Power and poverty

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND
ONE of two institutions set up by Britain and US at end of second world war to protect world against instability of 1930s. Along with the World Bank, the IMF was designed to oversee global economic order. It is largely funded by taxpayers of member countries and makes short-term loans to deal with economic emergencies.

THE WORLD BANK
THIS raises cash on global financial markets, has longer term role in reconstructing war-damaged economies and alleviating poverty and deprivation. Real power at IMF and World Bank rests with US, as biggest shareholder with 18 per cent of votes, and other G7 countries: Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Canada.

HIGHLY INDEBTED POOR COUNTRIES PROGRAMME
HIPC is World Bank and the IMF's plan to cut debt burden of 41 of world's most indebted countries. To qualify for relief, countries must have debt levels in excess of what the World Bank considers "sustainable" — where they are spending more than a fifth to a quarter of export earnings on servicing debts.

STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT
THE tough economic policies designed by IMF and World Bank for countries wanting concessional loans. Countries must have three-year track record of economic reform before qualify for HIPC and a further three years before they get their money. The fund advocates slashing government spending to cut budget deficits, privatising state industries and freeing up economy to competition.

Island with its hand in the lion's mouth

Despite its vast shanty towns, Jamaica is deemed too wealthy for debt relief. But its poor are the ones who are paying, writes **Gary Younge** in Kingston



Almond Town, Kingston, is just one of the sprawling shanty towns of Jamaica, where the gulf between rich and poor is huge PHOTOGRAPH: MARC FRENCH

TO FIND Sharon Palmer's home, which nestles in a valley between two peaks of the Blue Mountains, you must follow the red wires from the telegraph pole at the top of her road.

The wires, syphoning current from the pylons, illegally provide her with the electricity she cannot afford to pay for. The dirt road, which passes a graveyard where poorly buried bodies emit a dreadful stench, is lined with black plastic bags full of human excrement left by people who, like Ms Palmer, do not have lavatories.

After a couple of minutes you will find it; one room encased in brick and topped with a corrugated iron roof from which hang plastic bags to catch the rain and what remains of last year's Christmas decorations. Inside there are two beds — two of her daughters sleep on the floor — a large cardboard cylinder which serves as the family wardrobe, an old fridge and an even older black and white television.

Tell her that Jamaica is classified as a middle-income country and she will laugh. Ask her what she thinks of the country's huge debt and she will shrug. "I know that the government borrowed a lot of money a long time ago and that they are still paying it back. But I don't know what they did with it. And I know that every time I go to buy a loaf of bread I am paying it back," she says.

Ms Palmer, aged 34, a sinewy woman with a fiery temperament, has never had a permanent job. She occasionally sells knickers and sanitary towels by the roadside. The rest of the time she takes care of her five children, including an epileptic son.

Ms Palmer's situation is desperate. So is the Jamaican economy's. One week sees the largest bail-out of a private bank in the country's history, more than 1,000 redundancies announced and a budget that earmarks more than half of the coming year's resources for servicing debt.

But according to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, neither Ms Palmer nor Jamaica are desperate enough. Classified as a "severely indebted middle-income country" Jamaica is considered too wealthy to qualify for World Bank debt relief.

No matter that its wealth distribution is among the most unequal in the world, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef). In Norbrook and Cherry Gardens, around the capital Kingston, there are mansions and lawns that would not look out of place in Beverly Hills. But within 15 minutes' drive there are houses roofed with corrugated iron, where running water and sanitation — and even part-time jobs for their inhabitants — are rarities.



Yet the World Bank and the IMF do not deal with people but statistics and economic jargon. When Vietnam invaded Cambodia in 1978 the IMF called it a "misallocation of resources due to involvement in a regional conflict"; a report on apartheid South Africa referred to the systematic racial discrimination as "structural rigidities in the labour market".

So despite the shanty towns the books say Jamaica is wealthy enough to take care of its financial burdens.

In that respect the IMF has not disappointed. Since 1996 the Jamaican government has paid its debts in full, almost as a matter of fiscal and national pride. In its most recent budget it earmarked five times more for debt servicing than for health, and 10 times more than for education.

It is people like Donna Tyler who suffer. Ms Tyler, aged 32, had never been sick when her fiancé came down with what seemed like a bad cold a few years ago. She took him to the public clinic and was told both were HIV-positive and that he had Aids. He died a few weeks later.

She gets no support from the government. The drug cocktails she would need to keep her going cost more than five times what she earns as a nurse. "I have two children and I also care for my grandfather. By the time I take out expenses for my kids' school there is not very much left. I just have to get along some way," she says.

Given the stigma of Aids, neither her children nor her grandfather know of her condition. It is a secret she shares only with an usher at her church and a close friend.

The number of those infected with HIV is doubling every two years in Jamaica. Yet the resources the government has dedicated to the problem are pitiful.

"The government is spending what little money it has on prevention rather than people who already have HIV," says Christine English of Jamaican Aids support, which receives no state aid. "But they don't even really have enough money for that."

Much of the responsibility for dealing with the consequences of Aids falls on women, who are sole heads of three out of five households.

"Women have carried most of the burdens here for their families for centuries," says Margaret McCauley of the Association of Women's Organisations. "The bad economic situation has helped push up incidents of domestic violence and sexual violence."

For the past few years the Jamaican government's priority has been neither health nor education but fighting inflation — in which it been very successful. In 1992 inflation topped 75 per cent. Now it is in single figures. Anti-inflation policies have been pursued with an almost religious zeal that even the IMF believe to be too harsh.

"Usually it is something we encourage, but it must come as part of a policy mix," a senior IMF source said. "We think they are trying to bring it down too quickly and it has created some economic imbalances."

Much of the battle against inflation has been funded not by belt-tightening in the government but finding new people to borrow from. In recent years the government has turned from foreign to domestic sources. Some of the money they have borrowed at home they are using to pay creditors abroad. It is a downward spiral of indebtedness which is like robbing Peter to pay Paul and then robbing Paul as well.

The knock-on effects have not been encouraging either. The increase in domestic debt has forced interest rates up to about 28 per cent, which is in turn stifling domestic investment.

"What Jamaica needs is economic growth, and I don't see a lot of growth going on there," an IMF insider said. "That economy hasn't really been doing much for 20 years."

But given the hard times during the 1980s, when Jamaica found itself at the mercy of the multilateral behemoths, some here welcome the government's conservative approach.

"We have a proverb here," says one economist. "When you put your hand in a lion's mout' be careful how fast you tek it out."

Wealth of nations

☐ **Rupert Murdoch's wealth is estimated at $4 billion, the same as the debt of Lebanon.**

☐ **The poorest countries are still spending more than 20 per cent of their export earnings on debt service, even once they get relief under the World Bank's Highly Indebted Poor Countries programme. In 1953, Germany's war debts were cut to the point where it paid just 3.5 per cent of its export earnings in debt service.**

☐ **Ghana spends an average of $4 a year on each person on health. In 1996 the country spent $26 per person on debt service.**

☐ **Developing countries received $25.1 billion in aid in 1997, down from $35.1 billion in 1991. So for each $1 aid, $11 went back to the West in debt service.**

☐ **The 1,000 richest people in Britain have a combined wealth of $175 billion – more than the entire $154 billion debt of all of South Asia and almost as much as Brazil's $179 billion. The Queen's wealth of $410 million would pay the debt of Azerbaijan or Estonia.**

☐ **World military spending is $800 billion a year. Britain spends $35 billion a year on the military. The US spends $280 billion. The annual world trade in weapons is valued at $22 billion per year.**

☐ **Of the 10 most indebted countries, eight have suffered civil war or violent conflict since 1990.**

☐ **Of the 25 most indebted countries, 15 are conflict countries.**

☐ **The debt burden of the poorest countries is 94 per cent of their annual economic output. For the countries in line for debt relief under the HIPC initiative it is 125 per cent.**

THE NEW SLAVERY

Details of how to join the Guardian/Jubilee 2000 campaign to cancel unpayable debt and where to send contributions will be published in Friday's 8-page supplement.

You can sign Jubilee 2000's online petition at http://reports.guardian.co.uk/debt. The website also gives details on how to help the campaign and how to join the human chain at Saturday's G8 summit in Birmingham. A full archive of the Guardian's debt relief coverage will be maintained on the site and there will be regular updates on the progress of the campaign until the millennium.

You can write directly to Jubilee 2000 at PO Box 10, London W10 7WY.

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Even those who helped Indonesia's dictator to power back their children's revolt, writes **Andrew Higgins** in Jakarta

Suharto old guard turns to students

AS A rebel aged 17, G. P. Solichin led a platoon of 40 men against the Dutch, the colonial power that had ruled Indonesia for more than 300 years. Half a century on, he waddled into a chandeliered suburban parlour this week to enrol on the same side as his youngest son, an accountancy student and campus rebel aged 24. The target now is another tenacious power: President Suharto.

"This system has failed. Everyone can see it does not work. We need a new Indonesia," the retired lieutenant-general said at a gathering of former Suharto stalwarts turned elderly dissidents. "We have spent all our riches for development, but the fact is that so many of our people are still poor. Politically, we are bankrupt too."

> 'We have spent all our riches for development, but so many people are still poor'

Students, including his son, who studies in Bandung, have been shouting the same message for months. As their campaign for change has gathered pace, however, it has become clear that campus demonstrators represent much more than the frustrations and aspirations of Indonesian youth. They are the proxies of their more fearful, more established, but often no less dissatisfied elders.

The crucial question is whether they are also speaking for sections of the Indonesian armed forces, widely acknowledged as the arbiter of President Suharto's fate.

"Many people can't say openly what the students say. They are still afraid. But they support them. They are glad the students say what they can't," said Ikrar Musabhakti, a scholar at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences. "Indonesia is the republic of fear. People are still very traumatised by what happened in the Sixties. They still believe Suharto is quite strong."

When Indonesia last changed presidents, in 1966, as many as 500,000 people died in a witch-hunt for suspected communists and a frenzy of local score-settling. Particularly savage was the killing in Bali, now a popular resort island celebrated for its gentleness and grace. The slaughter exposed the gruesome gap between placid appearances and boiling rage beneath the surface, a gap that still confounds attempts to fathom the subterranean depths of Indonesian political and military manoeuvring.

Gen Solichin, aged 72, was for years a pillar of the establishment his son's generation want toppled. He served as governor of west Java, a stronghold of Indonesia's ruling elite, and as a cabinet-rank adviser to Mr Suharto from 1972 to 1988. He now backs his rebellious son and hopes that serving officers in the military where he made his own career will follow. With four other former generals, six former cabinet ministers and 35 other distinguished veterans, he has signed a petition supporting the students and describing the March "election" of Mr Suharto to a seventh five-year as a "wrong decision that should be revoked".



A student waves an Indonesian flag at riot police yesterday in Yogyakarta, the cultural heart of Java, as the continuing revolt gains support from many older people who hope the army will eventually side with them to force out Suharto

PHOTOGRAPH: PATRICK DE NOIRMONT

Their petition was made public on Monday at the Jakarta home of Mrs Supeni, an elderly activist in the 28 October Group, an opposition caucus. "Whatever the consequences, we have to do something," said Ali Sadikin, another lieutenant-general of the generation that drove out the Dutch. Comparing Suharto to a Javanese king, he demanded an end to his "absolute power". Looming over the gathering were two paintings of the man Mr Suharto overthrew, Indonesia's first president, Sukarno. Also peering from the wall was Saddam Hussein, whom Mrs Supeni met in Baghdad soon after the Gulf War. Other mementoes were more benign — pictures of children and grand-children in university gowns. Mrs Supeni is particularly proud of a grand-daughter who has joined the protests. "When I asked her why she was demonstrating she said: 'I have to because it is our responsibility'."

The cheering of disgruntled former generals and other veterans from the sidelines adds another voice of dissent, but it highlights a big obstacle in the way of the students. Lieut-Gens Solichin an Sadikin and their friends have little to lose: their careers are over.

"Why did these people never say anything when they were still in power? Why do they always wait until they have finished their jobs?" asked Mr Ikrar, the political researcher. "What we need are people who make statements when they are still in power."

Students were asking the same questions in their makeshift command shelter at the Univeristy of Indonesia. Benedictus Dwi Hari Praseyo, aged 18 and an economics undergraduate, said his parents supported his involvement in protests but never joined them. "My parents are part of the problem, they have benefitted from the status quo." All the same, they are willing to pay to keep him in Jakarta for summer classes so that he can continue his activism. The paradox puzzled him.

The biggest and most perilous unknown is Abri, the armed forces. In 1965-66, senior officers turned against Sukarno and brought the obscure Major-General Suharto to power. Will they turn again?

Gen Solichin believes soldiers are torn, but said: "It is still possible to have change even though the people in power are part of the system. We believe they will listen."

S Africa's drift to one-party rule gathers momentum

David Beresford in Johannesburg

RENEWED fears of a drift towards de facto one-party rule are emerging as the central issue on which South Africa's general election will be fought next year.

A provincial premier, Mathews Phosa, has supported a call from the ANC's secretary general, Kgalema Motlanthe, for a two-thirds majority so that it can make constitutional changes to speed up the "transformation" of society.

The development follows appeals by a senior Inkatha official for unity with the ANC, on the grounds that there is no hope of ever mounting a successful challenge for power. Sipo Mzimela, the Inkatha prisons' minister in Nelson Mandela's coalition government, has called on the country's black population to "vote as one" in the election.

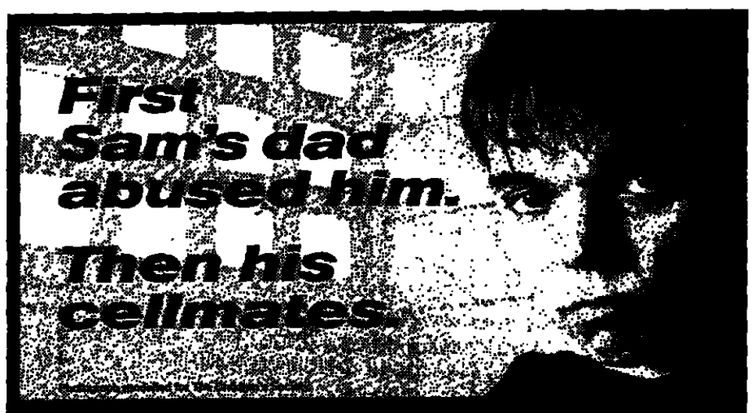
On the other side of the racial divide conservative whites appear to be abandoning the National Party in favour of the liberals of the Democratic Party, as the most effective champions of their ethnic interests. A number of senior Nationalists have started campaigning for the Democratic Party.

Nationalist woes have been exacerbated by a smear campaign against its leader, Marthinus van Schalkwyk. A man has has alleged that Mr Van Schalkwyk paid him for sex two years ago.

Meanwhile the ANC is battling to keep the lid on scandals in its own ranks over allegations that senior figures in the party spied for the government during the apartheid years.

The premier of Gauteng province, Mathole Motshekga, has issued a writ against a local newspaper for alleging that he worked for South African military intelligence. And an MP with the Pan Africanist Congress, Patricia de Lille, has renewed threats to produce evidence identifying apartheid-era spies in the present cabinet. On Friday Ms de Lille won a court order overturning an attempt by the ANC majority to suspend her from parliament for naming spies. Among others she identified the defence minister, Joe Modise, and the deputy minister responsible for the intelligence services, Joe Nhlanhla.

De Lille has pledged to present evidence against 12 alleged spies — including three ministers, two deputy ministers and two provincial premiers. She is demanding a parliamentary debate on the issue.



Sam had been sexually abused. At 15 he was arrested and held on remand. Locked in a cell 23 hours a day, he endured constant threats from the older lags. It's unlikely Sam will get a jail sentence, but his time inside has taught him all about intimidation, theft and mugging.

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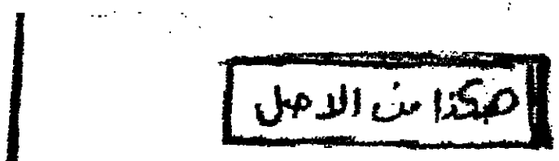
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Turkey's democracy leader shot

Chris Morris in Ankara

TURKEY'S best-known human rights activist was shot and seriously wounded yesterday as he sat at his desk in his Ankara office. Akin Birdal, the president of the Human Rights Association, was rushed to a local hospital where last night doctors said he was in a critical condition.

Officials at the Human Rights Association said two men in their early twenties walked into Mr Birdal's office on a busy Ankara street and shot him repeatedly. He was hit six times in the chest and the leg, and doctors say that even if he survives he could be badly brain-damaged. The two attackers fled into the street, and gave no indication of their motives. Mr Birdal has been a tireless critic, however, of human rights violations in Turkey, and has received several death threats in recent months.



A colleague attends human rights activist Akin Birdal, lying unconscious after being shot

Politicians, many of whom have been severely criticised in the past by Mr Birdal, condemned the shooting. "I am very saddened by this incident," said the prime minister, Mesut Yilmaz. "Our police forces have begun the necessary work to capture those responsible."

Some human rights campaigners blamed the shooting on a series of provocative reports in the Turkish media, which have suggested that Mr Birdal had close links with the Kurdish rebel movement, the PKK, and of having taken orders from PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan. The accusations followed alleged confessions by guerrilla commander Semdin Sakik, captured by Turkish forces in northern Iraq. "It was an invitation to murder," said one prominent lawyer. A close friend and colleague said Birdal and his family had received telephone death threats in the past two months.

There has been a wave of violence in Turkey involving extreme rightwing and leftwing groups since militant clashes with police at a May Day rally in Istanbul. Ultra-nationalist Grey Wolf militants have been blamed for the killing of a Kurdish political party member and a university student since then.

Mr Birdal is well respected in many foreign embassies in Ankara as a representative of Turkey's beleaguered human rights community. He has been especially critical of what he called the Turkish government's "dirty war" against the Kurds in the south-east of the country.

The British embassy here released a copy of a letter sent by the British ambassador, David Logan, to the Human Rights Association, which expressed his shock about the attempt to kill Mr Birdal. "I know that you will be determined to carry on your brave work to further the cause of human rights in Turkey despite this outrageous and cowardly act," the letter said.

The Human Rights Association has 55 local branches and more than 20,000 members across the country. It is the target of constant harassment by the security forces, even though Turkey's political leaders say they too are committed to improving human rights. In the wake of this shooting, human rights activists will question that commitment even more.

"This is a warning to people who oppose official state policy on sensitive subjects such as the Kurdish question," said the chairman of the Human Rights Foundation, Yavuz Onen. "This attack was aimed at silencing dissidents."

Turkey's human rights record is regularly criticised by Western countries. It was one of the factors cited by the European Union last December when it decided to exclude Turkey from the next wave of EU enlargement.



Relatives mourn Isuf Hajdari, aged 58, shot by Serbian police who described him as a terrorist. Local people said he was an innocent bystander

'I don't believe in the US envoy. This army is freeing the Albanian people'

Jonathan Steele meets a Kosovan guerrilla leader whose weapons will do the talking

THERE have been many times in the bloody history of the Balkans when diplomats have looked irrelevant. Yesterday was one such occasion.

First came the pomp as President Clinton's special envoy, Richard Holbrooke, swept into Pristina, in the Serb province of Kosovo. Police stopped the traffic to speed him and his armour-plated Cadillac on to the latest round of talks in four days of shuttle diplomacy.

On a dirt road, little more than an hour later, came the reality. Standing beside his BMW with a pistol in his belt, a commander of the world's fastest-growing guerrilla movement, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), gave his view of the American peace mission.

"I don't believe in Holbrooke. It makes no difference to us whether he comes here or not. The Serbs don't budge. It is this army which is freeing the people."

His no-nonsense comments were interpreted by a young Albanian woman in full camouflage gear with a Kalashnikov in her hand and a Yugoslav pistol in her belt.

Nearby, KLA men patrolled their trenches. Machine-guns and grenades pointed down the road, which the Serb police no longer dare to travel. In barely two months a shadowy group of 150 partisans has grown into an army of an estimated 12,000 guerrillas.

Interviews on policy are not given willingly, and we had to wait for half an hour while a uniformed officer in his early forties took our passports for checking and returned with the commander. He was in his mid-thirties and wore a black Levi shirt and jeans. Despite his nonchalant dress, in rank and attitude he was clearly the senior man.

> The young female interpreter had a Kalashnikov in her hand and a pistol in her belt

"Our job is to free the whole of Kosovo as well as the Albanians of Macedonia and Montenegro. This is a big land divided into three," he said when asked whether the guerrillas would be satisfied with independence for Kosovo, 90 per cent of whose people are Albanian.

Diplomats have warned that the war in Kosovo may spill over into Macedonia and Montenegro, the two neighbouring entities of the former Yugoslavia.

"Do you want to unite with Albania?" we asked.

"I'm not permitted to say," he replied.

The guerrillas have created several liberated zones in recent weeks but are not having everything their way. As we waited for the commander a procession of nine women in white Islamic veils had filed into a nearby house. A large white mourning flag fluttered outside. They were paying their respects to the father of a 31-year-old guerrilla who had been shot by police as they responded to an ambush on the main road from Pristina to Kosovo's second city, Pec, on Saturday.

Kosovo's civilian politicians are as much in the dark about the leadership of the KLA as foreigners, and there was no way to know how close to the top the commander we spoke to was. But he had been in the KLA since its inception in 1993, he said.

Asked when the KLA would free the capital, the commander laughed.

"Top secret," smiled his young interpreter before the commander added: "The KLA is in every town"

As if to confirm the point, the Yugoslav news agency, Tanyug, reported on Monday that police had arrested seven Albanians in Pec for "abetting terrorists". Another 13 were charged in Kosovska Mitrovica with being members of the KLA.

In Pristina itself, in an area of narrow hillside streets, residents showed reporters around a house which had been raided by police during the night. The glass front door was shattered and grenade shrapnel pock-marked the walls and ceilings. The beds were upturned as though someone had been searching underneath, presumably for weapons.

> 'Do you want to unite with Albania?' we asked. 'I'm not permitted to say,' he replied

Residents said the police had burst into the house at 4am while the four students who lived there slept. An elderly neighbour, Isuf Hajdari, who had come out to look was shot in his garden. Spent bullets lay in a patch of lettuce beside a pool of blood.

The Serbian interior ministry described the incident as a foiled terrorist attack on the police, adding that one officer was injured. The attackers were said to have fled into a house in which police later found weapons, ammunition, military maps, wigs, masks, and "terrorist training manuals".

The statement described the dead 58-year-old man as a terrorist but did not mention whether the others had escaped or been arrested.

Mr Holbrooke, meanwhile, was holding two hours of talks at the home of Ibrahim Rugova, the leader of the Democratic League of Kosovo, the province's largest Albanian political party. The US envoy later left for Belgrade for talks with the Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic.

The diplomat, who strong-armed the warring parties in Bosnia into the Dayton peace agreement in 1995, was deliberately downbeat in his few comments to reporters.

"We're trying to get a process going. All other details are being discussed and, I might add, without much progress," he said as he left Pristina.

Albanian politicians in Kosovo who met Mr Holbrooke on Sunday said the Americans wanted to go it alone. Washington is frustrated by the softness of the Europeans in the six-nation diplomatic contact group and by Mr Milosevic's continuing refusal to accept Felipe González, the former Spanish prime minister, who is the international community's designated mediator.

"We discussed some pragmatic steps with Mr Holbrooke," said Mahmut Bakalli, who is in Mr Rugova's negotiating team. "If Milosevic doesn't agree with mediation, the Americans said they would be involved. The aim is to find an interim solution which lasts for a year or so, and leads to a final one."

Mr Bakalli said he expected a phased process with informal meetings then "talks about talks" and finally "substantive negotiations".

But even if Mr Rugova were to reach an agreement, the armed men on the back roads would have none of it.

"Our position is to speak to the Serbs about the borders, and nothing else," said the pistol-packing commander.

"If Rugova agrees to some sort of deal, weapons speak a different language."

"No compromise," added the female guerrilla.

PoWs spurn Akihito's regrets

Jonathan Watts in Tokyo and John Ezard

AT A RARE press conference before a forthcoming visit to Britain, Japan's Emperor Akihito yesterday acknowledged that the second world war still cast a shadow over bilateral relations.

"We cannot forget that there are people in both countries who have made efforts to heal the wounds of war," the emperor, aged 64, said.

"But there are still areas in which the wounds of war remain, and which are sometimes reported in the British press," Kyodo News quoted him as saying.

The briefing appeared designed to forestall protests by former prisoners of war, who oppose the imperial visit and want compensation and an unequivocal apology from Tokyo.

Emperor Akihito said it was important to understand the suffering of British prisoners of war in Japanese camps. He pledged to foster friendly ties.

Last night the chairman of the Japanese Labour Camps Survivors' Association in Britain said the emporer's remarks were "all words — and words are not enough."

Arthur Titherington, aged 76, one of 90 British prisoners of war of 523 to survive three and half years in a mine in Taiwan, was angry at being refused a meeting with Akihito.

He said Japanese officials had refused requests for discussions. "How can you be reconciled when the other side won't talk to you?. They are hiding behind words."

The imperial couple will arrive in London on 25 May during a two-week tour of Europe, and will also visit Portugal and Denmark. It will be the first official visit to Britain by a Japanese emperor since the early 1970s, when Akihito's father, the wartime emperor Hirohito, was given the silent treatment by the crowds that lined the route of his procession.

Both governments have been working hard to ensure a warmer welcome this time around. To cement ties, the emperor will lay a wreath at Westminster Abbey to commemorate the war dead and visit Cardiff, where there is a concentration of Japanese factories. The Queen is expected to make the emperor a Knight of the Garter, an honor only bestowed on 24 living people.

The emperor was also asked whether the law could be changed to allow for a female emperor since Crown Prince Naruhito is childless and his brother has no sons. He replied that it was a matter for parliament to decide.

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The Guardian INTERACTIVE

Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

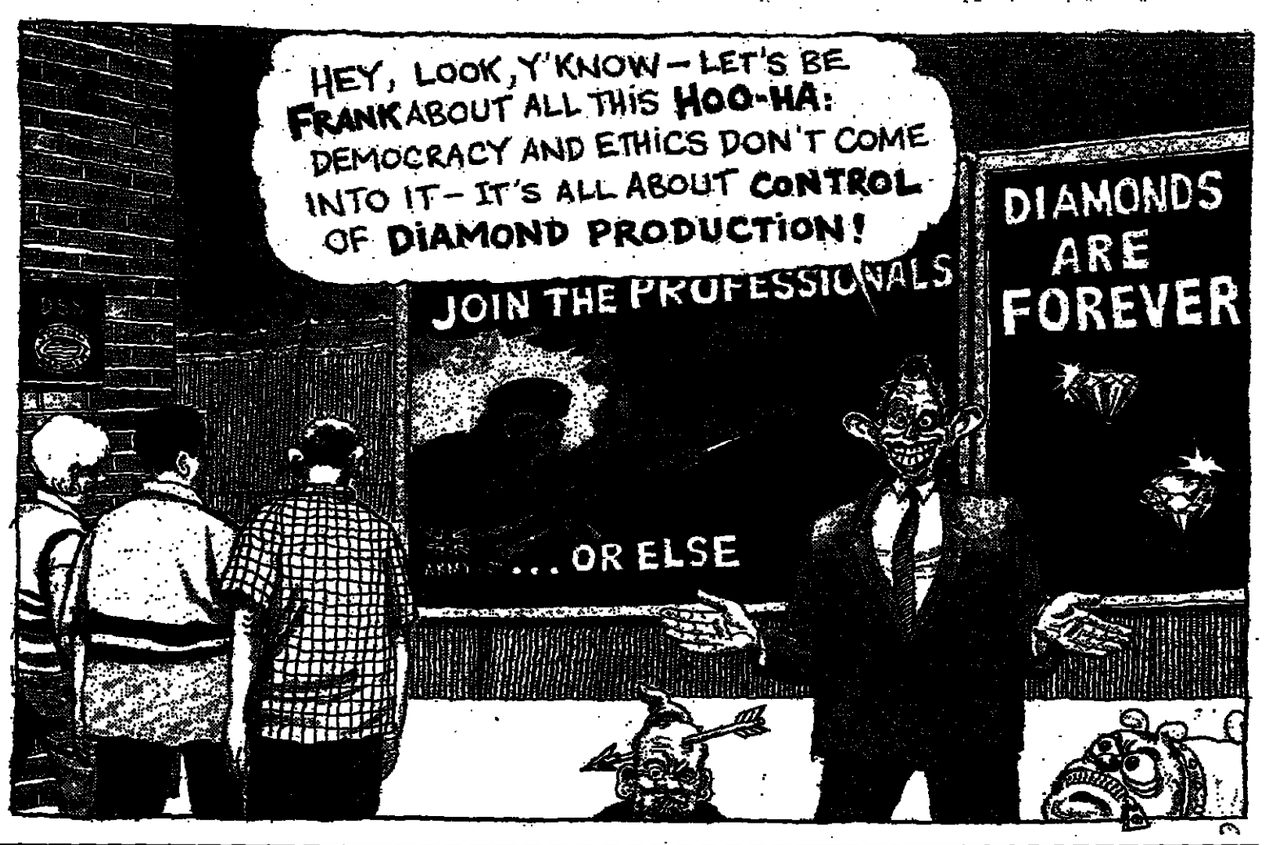
CLOSE students of the House of Commons are thrilled by the sensational emergence of a great parliamentary wit. It is Margaret Beckett, the President of the Board of Trade. Speaking in a debate about the Competition Bill on Monday, Margaret was happy (or at least willing) to fall into line with Tony Blair over his beloved Rupert Murdoch. As the paper at the centre of the row over predatory pricing, the Times — not always so zealous, in strictest sooth, about reporting its own affairs — stuck her words on its front page, relating how she told the House the Government would not accept a Lord's amendment outlawing these cut price campaigns as this would give the State (Can you see it coming? I confess, I didn't) "the power to control how national newspapers behave". There are no words. Not within a week of Number 10 vetoing Rizla Rosie Boycott's appointment of Paul Routledge as her political editor at the Express. Amazing.

As promised yesterday, meanwhile, we are now running everything past Downing Street before it appears. Or trying to. When my colleague, Simon Bowers, rang Number 10 yesterday, they were playing things cool. Simon explained that we were thinking of writing about Margaret Beckett, and how should we play it? "She's got a whole department at her fingertips," said the press officer. "Why don't you talk to them?" Because it's extremely important to run everything past Downing Street. "Speak to the DTI." But, in the light of the Rout . . . "Speak to the DTI." But . . . "Speak to the DTI." Can we at least fax you the column, for approval? "Fax ahead by all means," he said, "but that's not to say it's all go." I don't know what it means either, and frankly, how we are supposed to stay on message in the face of such obtuseness is beyond me. Still, we must and will keep trying.

THE Diary (note, once again, how it is invariably that impersonal entity when a cock-up has been made) is notified that, contrary to what somebody may have loosely suggested here yesterday, Philip Gould (although an employee of Express proprietor Clive Hollick) does not attend Rizla's editorial conferences. Meanwhile, continuing the climb up-market, the paper has signed Andrew Marr, a sensitive soul but a superb political columnist, to write some stuff (as has the Observer). He will not be going to conference either.

RUMOUR enshrouds the career prospects of Mandy Mandelson, the lithe and lissom member for Hartlepool. Mandy has been tipped (not least, judging by the placement of the leaks, by his good self) to join the cabinet in David Clarke's Cabinet Office job; this, hilariously, would make him (among other things) Minister for Open Government. However, in the light of Cookie's African problems, he is now, it seems, making noises about the Foreign Office, which has always been his true ambition (all those grand country house weekends). His grandpa, Morrison, did the job once, albeit not very well, and Mandy loves a bit of dynasty. Indeed, my sane and rational friend Paul Johnson, who is close to Mandy via their mutual chum Carla Powell, recently talked him up as Foreign Secretary, praising — would you believe this? — his "discretion". That, we feel, is enough searing, unintentional irony for one column.

IN Germany, emergency medical treatment has rescued Werner Hertz from serious injury. Mr Hertz, a Munich businessman, was rushed to hospital with his mobile phone inserted in his rectum. He had passed out, naked, on his office floor, Paul Sussman reports in the Big Issue, and only the fortuitous depression of the redial button as he fell, which alerted his wife to "strange gurgling sounds", saved him. Mr Hertz was reticent about the cause of the insertion. "In business," he was only prepared to say, "you must be prepared for every eventuality."



Viva la mediator! And you thought Eurovision was just tasteless trivia

Jonathan Freedland



IT'S not just the terminally sad who watched the Eurovision Song Contest on Saturday night. We've known for years that sophisticated, irony-loving fans of kitsch also lap it up for its sequins, its hairstyles, its boom-bang-a-bang melodies. But there is another, unheralded kind of Euro-viewer, too: the passionate devotee of international politics. For the Eurovision Song Contest stands as proof that, to the keen eye, political conflict is not confined to the polling booth and the debating chamber — it's throbbing away in the bowels of mass culture.

This year's battle in Birmingham was a classic example. The victory of Dana International — an Israeli transsexual in a Gaultier gown — was the result of blatant diplomatic jockeying, as Europe engaged in a televised hour of settling old scores and sealing new alliances. What's more, Dana's prize triggered an Israeli reaction as gravely political as any row in the Knesset.

The ultra-orthodox were furious from the start that a man-turned-woman was to be the Jewish state's musical ambassador. One of the religious parties filed a petition with the Israeli Supreme Court to stop Dana travelling to Birmingham; they demanded the prime minister intervene, darkly threatening to bring down his government if he did not. "Dana is an abomination," said the deputy health minister, Rabbi Shlomo Ben-Izri of the ultra-religious Shas party, branding her a "cross-breed" and a pervert. "Even in Sodom there was nothing like it."

Dana's success has only intensified their anger. One rightwing commentator suggested this week that the European juries had deliberately voted for the ex-man in a feather-boa as "a slap in the face" to the Jewish people. The elevation of an Israeli transsexual was all part of an anti-Semitic plot — to make Israel a global laughing stock. Among secular, humanistic Israelis, Dana has become an instant heroine. Gay rights activists have always struggled to be heard in Israel, an intensely macho society which turns every male into a life-long soldier. That military ethos, combined with the religious prohibition on homosexuality, has kept Israeli gays in the closet longer than their western counterparts. On Saturday night they came out: drag queens kissing in public, male couples clutching both the Israeli flag and the rainbow emblem of gay pride. Israel's women, Arabs and secular Jews — and all those who reject the rule of *halacha*, or ancient Jewish law — probably gave a cheer, too. To the 300 million who watched Eurovision, Dana's triumph may have looked like a bit of a lark. But to one side in Israel's cultural war, it represented a sweet victory.

Which is not to suggest that entertainment value and artistic merit alone swayed the minds of the various national juries — who this time consisted of ordinary citizens, phoning in their verdicts during the broadcast. On the contrary, the scoring process oozed politics from the off.

Aficionados of the voting ritual remember its rhythms long after they've forgotten the songs. The German and French judgment of the Brits is always interesting, as is the Greek-Turkish policy of giving each other *nul points*. Since 1969 the contest has featured a new treat: close analysis of the voting habits of the emerging democracies.

Saturday's show did not disappoint. The Birmingham crowd booed as France gave the UK a measly three points and hissed as the Germans sent just a single *point* our way. "Ah, you spoil us, Ambassador," remarked an acid Terry Wogan, capturing the mood perfectly. Britain maintained its own tradition, by giving France nothing.

THE audience were alive to this geo-politicking all evening, groaning as Greece gave Cyprus 10 points and guffawing when the Cypriots returned the compliment with the maximum 12 points. The Scandinavians, meanwhile, took neighbourly backscratching to new, Nordic heights. The Swedes gave Finland 10 points and a further 12 to Norway; Norway gave the Swedes 10 points while the Finns gave the Estonians 12 — a nice thank you for the 10 Finland had just got from Estonia.

The whole business was a crash course in political geography. Children across Europe could look and learn as the former Yugoslav republics of Macedonia and Croatia heaped praise on each other. Slovenia gave the game away as they awarded their full 12 to Croatia: "We hope they remember it next time," said the Slovene TV anchor, earning an upbraiding from Terry. "That was indiscreet," he sniffed — before explaining that Germany's high marks for Turkey might be related to the "large number of Turkish *gastarbeiten*" in the federal republic. As if to round off the tutorial, neutral Switzerland ended the evening with not a single point. No allies, no marks.

All of which made Israel's success diplomatically fascinating. Besides the progressive desire to back a transsexual, were the nations of Europe sending another message? The last time they garlanded Israel was in 1979, a matter of days after the signing of the Camp David peace accords with Egypt. The song back then was Hallelulah, and it sounded like a celebration of peace. Now Israel has been honoured just as it marks its 50th anniversary. It is even more fitting that, just as the country is grappling with deep confusion over its identity, it should win with a woman who used to be a man, an Israeli singing in cod Italian: Viva La Diva.

For those who missed out on this rich, complex festival of cultural and international relations — perhaps dismissing it as a night of low-brow trash — there is no need to despair. Another round is just weeks away. The World Cup is a quadrennial feast of geopolitics. Who can forget the Cold War showdown of East and West, when the two Germanies clashed in the 1974 tournament? Or the 1986 rerun of the Falklands war, when England was robbed by Maradona's Argentina just four years after the battle for the Malvinas? This year there is a special treat: on June 21 the US will meet Iran in Lyons. Who cares about the football, when politics of that calibre is in the offing? I can hardly wait.

Why stop at Sierra Leone? Why not restore Nigeria's elected government as well?

Opportunity knocks

Ken Wiwa

THE seeds of Robin Cook's little local difficulty were sown last October at the Commonwealth conference in Edinburgh.

To Nigerian pro-democracy activists gathered there, the lack of action on Nigeria from a government that had come to power promising a genuinely ethical foreign policy, was, to say the least, disappointing.

Instead, the Commonwealth trumpeted its role in brokering a deal in which the ousted but democratically elected president of Sierra Leone would be returned to power. President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah was invited to the summit and paraded before journalists.

I remember the utter astonishment on the faces of Nigerian pro-democracy activists when the initiative was announced. We were dumbstruck. We had also been out-manoeuvred by the announcement — which at once deflected attention from the Commonwealth's difficulties over Nigeria and reiterated its commitment to restoring democracy. There was a particular irony to this strategy: Kabbah would be returned to his rightful place with the support of Nigerian troops in Ecomog, the military arm of the Economic Community of West African States.

Game, set and match to the British Government and the Commonwealth; or so it seemed.

But how the chickens have come home to roost. In the course of implementing this counter-coup, the government became involved with some decidedly undemocratic bedfellows. At the time of the Commonwealth summit I doubt anyone envisaged that the strategy would entail involving a bunch of mercenaries in carrying out the counter coup. But, given the dominance within Ecomog of Nigerian forces, we should not have been surprised at this development.

The Nigerian military is an old hand at meddling in the affairs of its neighbours in West Africa. The horny hand of its various despotic regimes has, among other things, sponsored or plotted coups in Gambia and exacerbated the terrible troubles in Liberia. On each occasion, this meddling has been called peacemaking. This is the same Nigeria which regularly and loudly bleats about foreign interference in its own internal affairs.

> Overthrowing regimes can be a lucrative business

Stories of Nigerian soldiers profiting from the chaos in neighbouring countries are legion. For example, debt-ridden Nigeria is estimated to have spent $12 billion (£7 billion) in Liberia alone over the past decade. Quite how, why and where such large sums have been spent is anyone's guess. But, if the experience of Sierra Leone is anything to go by, then military intervention, coup plotting and "restoring democracy" are lucrative businesses for those involved.

That the British government might have found itself feeding this food chain, wittingly or not, has made a mockery of Robin Cook's ethical foreign policy.

That does not mean it is a policy that should be jettisoned. On the contrary, the government can turn this little local difficulty to its advantage.

After all, the British high commissioner to Freetown, Peter Penfold, is now something of a hero in the eyes of the embattled people of Sierra Leone. Moreover, some people argue that what is good for Nigeria is good for the whole of West Africa — so dominant is Nigeria in the region. Why then stop at Sierra Leone? This government could really earn its ethical stripes by restoring the democratically elected government in Nigeria. Lasting and peaceful change can and will come only through the ballot box. Then and only then will the chronic instability in West Africa end.

In the absence of such decisive action, phrases like "ethical foreign policy" and declarations about restoring democracy will remain empty slogans waiting to undo the work of spin doctors and ambush unwary governments while benefiting only opportunists and mercenaries.

Ken Wiwa's father, the writer and environmental campaigner Ken Saro-Wiwa, was executed by the Nigerian regime in 1995.

Sinister and secret

Polly Toynbee



IN THE Commons on Monday there was a rare chance to debate Rupert Murdoch's influence. At the second reading of the Competition Bill, two influential Labour backbenchers, Giles Radice and Chris Mullin, both chairs of key select committees, joined with the Liberal Democrats to press Margaret Beckett on whether the bill would outlaw Murdoch's predatory newspaper price war. So far Radice, Mullin and others are reserving their position until checking the complex bill with expert competition lawyers. But unless it will deal with Murdoch adequately, they will speak out when the bill returns.

Given Murdoch's mushrooming global interests, the price of the Times is a relatively small matter. But it is totemic — the only chance for MPs to express a view on the tycoon's activities. There will be no media bill to question his right to own so much of our press and television; nor to consider a privacy law alongside freedom of information.

Few doubt that Murdoch's hand reaches deep into the entrails of the Government. After all, if the Government were not so frightened of him, it could easily dispel the widespread criticism of Blair's close relationship with him — the only cloud cast over Blair's integrity. When questioned about it, it is the one subject that makes him jump.

Is the Government right to be so timid? Increasingly, it looks as if the answer may be Yes. They probably know a great deal more than we do about what they have to fear. His power is unspoken: no deals, no threats. On the surface, it looks straightforward, a matter of getting his papers to support, or at least not to trash, Labour. Nothing sinister there. But at what point does pleasing Murdoch exceed the bounds? When crucial policies in all kinds of areas become tainted by what Murdoch wants.

THERE are now so many policies in which Murdoch takes a hungry interest. If the Competition Bill does have teeth to act against him, it will be because it incorporates EU law. Murdoch is not anti-European for ideological reasons but because the only threat to limit his empire will come from Brussels. That's what Europe is for at its best — acting communally where any one government alone may be too weak. Can we join the euro without his permission?

Within weeks Chris Smith has to decide whether to allow Murdoch exclusive access to yet more live sporting events that are now protected for free-to-air BBC and ITV channels. Will he let Murdoch take over all non-home team World Cup matches (Scots couldn't even see English games) and test cricket? Or will Smith take a stand on behalf of the overwhelming number of sports fans who can watch them only on terrestrial channels? Only 16 per cent subscribe to Sky Sport. Will Smith knuckle under to his pressure — or to the considerable postbag he's had from the public demanding the right to see major national sport free?

Meanwhile, the question of Murdoch's ultimate control over the digital future is still being fought over by the small handful of people who understand the fiendish inner workings of set-top boxes. The issues may never be aired in ways the public can understand — until they find they are faced with a plethora of incompatible systems and, somehow or other, Murdoch's box wins. Can we trust the DTI to see it doesn't?

But yesterday, the darkest headed empire reared out of the mud. There may be raucous ribaldry at the Express's revelations about right-wing Daily Mail journalist Paul Johnson's marital infidelity. Ha, the Mail's arch-moraliser has been caught out! Having myself suffered at the hands of the Mail's unctuous double-standards, I might join in the general merriment. But I don't, because it is dirty journalism and an unwarranted entrapment.

But there is something more sinister beneath this. This was not the Express's own story. It was Murdoch's News of the World that sent Johnson's old lover in for a tryst in his bedroom wired up with a tape recorder, photographer in tow, back in early February. Returning with the tapes, she was paid £2,000. That is the stuff of News of the World journalism every Sunday, with any hapless vicar or inconsequential nobody. By its standards, Paul Johnson was quite a catch. Reporting these recordings alongside some of Johnson's trumpetings about the fallen morals of our wicked times, the scourge of single mothers and the like would make a good read for any newspaper that doesn't give a damn about personal privacy.

BUT, mysteriously, the story never appeared. The woman kept asking when it would be published, and kept being fobbed off with excuses, until she eventually took her story to the Express. But the Express failed to mention that this was all a News of the World set-up which that paper had so oddly sat on for months.

Now at this point some might think I enter the wilder shores of Murdoch conspiracy theory, but I think not. The News of the World has a Stasi-like operation rooting around for the misdeeds of politicians and prominent people. It does not always publish them. Sometimes it sits on them for ever. Their files are rumoured to contain the goods on a top Labour minister. During the last administration, time and again there were well-founded rumours that they were about to reveal sensations about various Tory ministers — but the revelations never came. Maybe the rumours were false.



Murdoch's hand reaches deep into the entrails of the government

Whether he has the stories or not, Murdoch is in charge of the most effective private undercover investigation outfit in Britain with the power to frighten a great many people. Now there's no reason to think he has ever used that power, or ever done anything so crude as even to hint at it. He doesn't have to. It's just there. But it is worth considering that Paul Johnson is now an intimate of Tony Blair's. They speak very highly of one another. They share deep religious convictions. His book jacket calls him an adviser to Blair. In the News of the World's scattergun collection of sordid stories on powerful people, who knows whether having the Johnson story up their sleeve might not come in handy some day, some time. And how many others lie in their safe, just in case?

Do I exaggerate? It's a testimony to Murdoch's power over public discourse in Britain that there is so much complacency about what and who he controls — and that so far Parliament has had so little to say about it.

صكذا من الاهل

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Cook's tour de force

But wait until inquiry ends

IF THERE is a ticking time-bomb in the Sierra Leone arms affair then the noise is still being drowned by the squelch of damp squibs landing around it. The Foreign Secretary Robin Cook not only survived the much advertised onslaught by Conservative MPs in the Commons yesterday led by Michael Howard, but he seemed to be positively revelling in it. After nearly an hour's grilling all that Michael Howard could demand was the names of those who received copies of the February 6 telegram to the FO (giving details of the overthrow of the rebel Sierra Leone government) and a promise that the forthcoming inquiry would be in public and presided over by a High Court judge. Since Mr Cook had already strongly denied all the accusations against him and his ministers — and pledged that the inquiry would report to the House and be conducted by someone with impeccable legal credentials — this wasn't exactly a body blow.

Mr Cook re-affirmed that he had had no prior knowledge and nor had his ministers or officials been involved in any untoward behaviour. Earlier, in a letter to Mr Blair, President Kabbah of Sierra Leone denied that he had made any specific requests for military assistance. He also backed Foreign Office minister Tony Lloyd's claim that ministers did not offer military backing, even covertly. Why? Because, apparently, the president had recalled during last autumn's Commonwealth Conference in Edinburgh that the same Tony Lloyd had stated that while the British Government would continue to give diplomatic and other support to his government, it could not provide it with weapons. The president added that as far as he was concerned, the matter was then closed. Mr Cook even managed to shrug off claims that he was less than diligent in the way he tackled official papers in his red box. He said that he either ticked them or wrote "OK" on all of them.

Michael Howard's moral outrage carried all the conviction of an unreformed alcholic lecturing on the dangers of drink. Mr Cook reminded him that when he was a minister he had lost 13 court cases against his policies and that he had refused to listen to officials on the difference between operational and policy matters. Labour MPs reminded him that his administration had connived in the selling of arms to Iraq and had even sold arms to Argentina right up to the eve of the Falklands invasion. What right had he to lecture anyone else on ethical foreign policy? Conservative MPs have been dying to avenge Mr Cook's forensic demolition of the former government's defence of its involvement in the Iraq arms affair and to capitalise on his maladroit handling of his domestic affairs. But on yesterday's performance they still have a lot to learn.

Mr Cook's main danger now is hubris. On present evidence he has little to fear on the substantive points but he is beginning to sound confident to the point of cockiness. There is still a Customs and Excise investigation to be conducted and an official inquiry after that. No one knows what worms might be unearthed by either of those inquiries. They have yet to search through government papers and question officials of Sandline, the company claiming that its role in the counter-coup had the full prior knowledge and approval of the Government. There are assuredly some serious questions to be asked about who in government knew about imminent intervention and, if they did, why information wasn't passed more quickly up the line. The question who is really in charge at the Foreign Office won't go away so easily. But we must never lose sight of the central fact that whatever qualifications emerge about the means, the outcome has (so far) been an unqualified success. A gang of brutal kleptocrats who had seized power in Sierra Leone were ousted by the legitimate democratic government. That is a triumph for ethical foreign policy.

Why no outrage?

Immigration needs an overhaul

EVEN ministers describe British asylum policy as a shambles. They said it again yesterday. Indeed, in respect of the withdrawal of benefits from asylum seekers, it was "a shambles within a shambles". It is, of course, an inherited one condemned by courts, human rights groups and churches. Every trick in the book has been used to deter applicants. Thousands of overseas airline staff were turned overnight into untrained immigration officers by the Carriers Liability Act making airlines responsible for any illegal immigrant who was able to break through the ever tighter visa restrictions. Similar internal trip wires were devised by Michael Howard with his snooper's charter which invited teachers, hospital workers and housing officers to blow the whistle on suspect people in Britain. Even the immigration officers, not Britain's most liberal group, declared the Howard idea to be "a licence for racism and recipe for disaster". Indeed, if the immigration procedures over which Howard presided had been in force two generations ago, Michael Howard would never have existed: his grandparents — one with Romanian and the other with Russian origins — would never have met.

So what is Labour going to do? To their credit, ministers have already abolished the primary purpose rule (which shamefully separated genuine married partners) and is committed to publishing, for the first time, confidential rule books which guide immigration decisions. Appeal rights for visitors stopped from coming to Britain for weddings and funerals will be restored. But all the other multiple issues await the current spending reviews and will only start emerging in July. The immigration minister conceded yesterday that the current support system for applicants — with benefits still withdrawn — was unsustainable. There were suggestions that the number of unsuccessful asylum applicants waiting to be returned home — currently standing at 20,000 — would rise to 110,000 by 2002. That will whet tabloid appetites. What was missing yesterday was any sense of outrage. What is needed is a complete overhaul: from the initial decision, frequently made against people who have not even been seen, to the need for judicial authorisation for all detentions. Over 10,000 applicants have been waiting here for a decision for over 5 years. They should be given exceptional leave to remain.

Sharing the road

This wheeze should be copied

WHERE Leeds leads, other towns and cities must surely follow. Britain's first traffic lane for car sharers, launched this week, is an excellent experiment. It is the first stretch of urban road in Europe to be so designated, although Madrid introduced the same idea on a trunk road two years ago and America did it over a decade ago. The six months trial is modest enough — a stretch of a mere mile of the A647 from Pudsey to Leeds — but it is nevertheless full of potential. During the peak traffic period, some 2,000 cars drive into Leeds carrying a total of 3,645 people. That works out at fewer than two people per car. The Madrid scheme managed to increase occupancy by as much as 10 per cent. If this were repeated on the same scale in Leeds, it would lift the average to two people per car. This won't, of course, change the world — or even the threat to global warming — but it is certainly a move in the right direction.

Leeds is demonstrating a canny Yorkshire ability to tap into other people's money. This is the city's third sensible traffic innovation. First came pedestrianisation in the centre, initially opposed by trades people but which has been a great success with the general public. They can now look at the city's fine historical buildings and its beautiful arcades without fear of being run down by a lorry or a car. Then came the guided bus, subsidised by central government, on a bus lane which shuts out cars by a concrete kerb. Every driver has been given a course on courtesy, which means they allow passengers with large bundles of shopping to reach their seats, before lurching forward. This has only increased passenger numbers. Now there is the car share lane, partly subsidised from Europe. All Leeds needs now is a tram. Then it would really catch up with Manchester. The last government restricted such schemes to one a year. Hopefully, John Prescott's white paper on transport this summer will end that nonsense.

Letters to the Editor

Foreign affairs at a glance

FOR a perspective on the politics of Sudan (Rebels put war before want, May 11), think of Braveheart with automatic weapons. A colonising force (England/north Sudan) exploits local rivalries to divide and rule (Scotland/south Sudan). Even when their chiefs let the people down, the cause of liberation from tyranny remains valid. If you were a Scot on the brink of retaking Glasgow and Dundee, would you stop while you were winning? If the English warchest was running short, and they wanted time to build a pipeline to take oil out of Scotland, would you agree to a ceasefire?
Peter Verney.
Editor, Sudan Update, Hebden Bridge, Yorks.

I'M pleased that Gordon Brown has spoken out about the predicament of the millions of Indonesian citizens living in poverty (May 9). The British government has in the past been notoriously quiet about human rights under the Suharto regime. However, poverty is nothing new in Indonesia and it's difficult not to conclude that the Chancellor has only spoken out because there are no major contracts at risk. Given Indonesia's economic difficulties, Suharto couldn't afford to buy British arms even if he wanted to.
David Clancy.
Managing editor, Asian Review of Business & Technology, London.

IT IS the first Cook coup of spring (Letters, May 11). But towards the end of May the voice of the Cook coup breaks; it stutters frequently when it calls; and early in June it becomes silent.
I Morgan.
Lincoln.

Labour, after a fashion

UNTIL reading your report about Armand Watts, the Labour mayor who resigned rather than agree to a conservative dress-code (How power dresser Pam became mayor, May 12), I was sympathetic. After all, pointless rules of ritual and etiquette have always been used to keep the workers in their place.

It turns out, though, that far from being in the spirit of Michael Foot's legendary Cenotaph donkey jacket, he is in fact an air-headed consumer-bunny who judges everyone by the labels they wear and thinks that jeans are OK as long as they cost a fortune, and the best trainers are made by Vietnamese child labour. It was less than surprising that he is a Blairite.
Terry Marshall.
London.

SO Chepstow Labour Party have introduced a dress code for their councillors. We shouldn't be surprised — style over substance seems to fit quite comfortably with the Blairite philosophy. However, there is a more important point. Ms Birchall and her supporters have imposed a dress code consisting of what I believe passes, in some unenlightened areas, as "accepted office wear". Mr Watts emphasises how expensive his "unacceptable" clothes are. Both of these views potentially prevent the poorer in society from becoming councillors.
Ian Maidlow.
Portslade, E Sussex.

AM I alone in being insulted by your continual offensive comments about anyone over 40? A typical example is in the story about Chepstow's mayor. Try substituting "black" for "over 40" or "white" for "young people" in your article and see how it reads. Young people are an important element in our society and deserve respect. So do those of us who seem to have sinned in your eyes by forgetting to die at 39.

You of all people should recognise the difference between substance and image and realise that the fresh New Labour image is actually managed by a group whose average age certainly exceeds the dreaded Four Oh. There's a lot of us about and we are a growing population. Politicians, (and newspaper editors) are already aware of the power of Middle England. It's time they remembered the power of middle-aged England.
Norman Carlingbull.
Hythe Marina Village. Hampshire.

I CAN'T understand why there is any concern about the new film based on Hideki Tojo or how the Italians could even consider Benedetto Carsaulo a possible assassin. The two men have always been perfectly dressed whenever appearing in public. I'm sure Councillor Pam Burchill would have had both chaps round for tea, at the drop of a well-brushed hat.
Andy Butterworth.
Liverpool.

The African view is: it's a coup

I AM a Sierra Leonean and, as a result of British colonial history, also British. I worked for many years in the Sierra Leone government and diplomatic service and am passionately committed to the establishment of democratic stability and sound economic management in that country (Sandline 'had FO warning over arms, May 12). As a British citizen, I am keen to see that Britain does not abdicate its responsibility towards a country that it fashioned and towards a people that look to it for assistance.

The media is highlighting a crisis in the Foreign Office that is of little or no concern to Sierra Leoneans. What matters to us is the outcome. An illegal and brutal regime has been ousted and a democratically elected government restored to power. There *should* be a policy of intervention in such a situation. This would be an ethical foreign policy par excellence. To have allowed the junta to remain in power would have meant years of indiscriminate slaughter. Tony Blair's intervention is timely and refreshing but the man of the hour is undoubtedly Peter Penfold.
John E Bankole Jones.
London.

AS a Nigerian, my only regret is that Peter Penfold couldn't have been Britain's High Commissioner to Nigeria.
Anthony Ojolola.
London.

IT'S rather worrying that Robin Cook can openly admit to collaborating with the Nigerian military junta — which got into power through similar circumstances. It is ironic that the same Nigerian military that annulled a free and fair election in June 1993 and jailed the winner without trial is now the arbitrator in restoring democracy in a neighbouring country!
Dr S Olubunmi-oke.
London.



Government wrong on union rights

AS academics with some specialist interest in the management of employment relations, we consider the debate surrounding the forthcoming white paper on employment rights to be both surprising and perplexing.

Surprising, because even within Labour's ranks, a dismaying zero-sum perspective assumes that to be pro-business requires an anti-union stance. On the contrary, research suggests that unionised firms are not trapped in a 1970s time-warp but as likely, if not more likely, to adopt innovative human resource practices than non-union counterparts. In the UK, where unions and collective bargaining have been rolled back, managers have largely resorted to authoritarian rather than people-centred approaches.

More perplexing is a stance which — allied with efforts to veto the proposed EU directive on employee consultation — runs against the grain of recent partnership agreements which place a premium upon informing and consulting workers. Ironically, the Government announced its opposition to the proposed directive the same weekend that Tesco and shopworkers' union Usdaw launched what is arguably the UK's most innovative and extensive employee consultation scheme.

The Trades Union Congress has accepted the end of single-channel representation, recognising that unions are not the only legitimate conduit for employee consultation. The TUC's position on recognition is a rational and equitable formula, an incentive for employers and employees representatives to fashion arrangements reflecting mutual needs and provides a basis for a new balance of workplace equity and efficiency. A modernising, stakeholder politics sits uneasily with attempts to deny or minimise employment rights enjoyed throughout the EU.
Prof Chris Brewster.
Cranfield University School of Management.
Prof Paul Thompson.
University of Edinburgh Management School.
Prof Roger Undy.
Templeton College, Oxford.
Prof Paul Willman.
University of London Business School
and 14 others.

Nuclear plans bring testing time for India's minorities

INDIA continually tries to gain a permanent seat on the UN Security Council but is always unsuccessful due to its abysmal human rights record, especially in the Punjab and Kashmir. The international community has seen behind the "largest democracy" mantra; the politics of non-violence died a long time ago and has been replaced with open confrontation with its neighbours and an upsurge in extreme Hindu nationalism.

As a Sikh, I feel this nuclear testing (Fury at Indian nuclear test, May 12) is a way to conjure up even more support for the right-wing BJP's "mythology" that India is once again in a "Golden Age" where it is invincible. This will encourage extremist Hindus to further increase oppression of the minorities in India.
Ravinder Singh.
London.

THE fact that India has conducted three nuclear tests will rightly be condemned.

But as always there will be a whiff of pots and kettles. So long as the existing nuclear-weapon powers continue to behave as if they believe that nuclear weapons have significant military and political utility — despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary — they must expect other countries to want them.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference Preparatory Committee (NPT PrepCom) meeting has just concluded in Geneva and apparently achieved little. The latest development confirms what was always suspected, that India's opposition to the NPT was less principled than they claimed at the time of its renewal. But the greatest threat to the future of this planet remains the 36,000 nuclear warheads still in existence. And the UK's small but not negligible proportion of these is part of the threat.
Frank Jackson.
World Disarmament Campaign, London.

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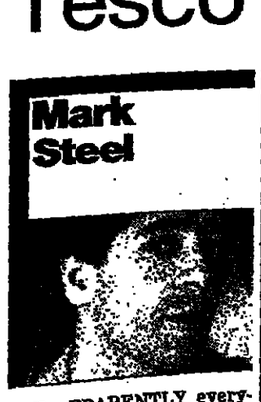
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APPARENTLY everyone loves New Labour. "Blair is our most popular prime minister ever," said the Daily Mirror. It seems we've all got posters of Tony on our walls and say things like, "You just don't understand, Mum, I really love him and I know Tony loves *me* too. That thing about the third way, he wrote it specially for me, I know he did."

Yet strangely, very few of us could get it together to vote for his party at the council elections. The low turn-out was partly explained, according to spin-doctors, by the population's "quiet contentment" with New Labour. The bizarre theory is that as people are satisfied with Blair, there was no point in their taking the trouble to vote for him.

So Labour canvassers must have been having the most peculiar conversations.

"Are you voting for us on Thursday?"

"No thank you, I like this Government."

"Well then, you ought to vote for us."

"No, I'm fine as I am, thank you."

"Then vote Labour."

"Ooh I don't want to do that, you see I'm a big fan of the Labour Party."

The answer to the low turn-out, according to some observers, is to place the polling stations in places like Tescos, as if the reason people didn't vote was that they were all thinking: "Well, much as I adore New Labour, you can't expect them to compete with an offer of four pence off shortbread biscuits."

The problem is assumed to be that it's too much hassle to get to the polling booth. One commentator said: "People had been asked to do their political bit a year before and resented having to go back again."

If you get back from the shops and realise you've forgotten to get any toothpaste, it's possible you'll say: "Oh sod it, I'm not going all the way back there." But how many people say: "I'm not going all the way back to the church hall to vote again. I only got back from there a year ago."

Surely truly popular leaders can overcome the fact that to vote for them you need to take a break from shopping. What if Gandhi's supporters had said: "We're very much with you, but could the next demonstration go past Halfords as we need to pick up a new fan belt?" The only explanation for the low turn-out is that there's less enthusiasm for Blair than imagined. So much less that the CBI should advise us not to pay our council tax. As there's no reason to recognise a council that's been elected by less than 40 per cent of the voters.

COMMENTATORS who deduce from poll findings that there's an overwhelming contentment with New Labour are highly selective about which polls they use. Every survey concludes that a large majority oppose further privatisations and support higher taxes for the rich. But these bits are quietly put to one side.

The most plausible explanation for these attitudes existing alongside Blair's high personal rating is that many people declare themselves "satisfied" with New Labour, while deep down they're extremely uneasy about them. Just as women might say they're satisfied with their husband — even though he comes home drunk and leaves dirty socks on the kitchen table — when they mean that they don't believe anything better is possible. Especially if they've just left someone after 18 years who came home drunk and left his dirty socks in the gravy boat.

How else can you explain why Ken Livingstone is a more popular choice for mayor of London than anyone in the Cabinet, while bottom of a Daily Telegraph "satisfaction" survey of Cabinet members was Peter Mandelson.

One common answer is that Livingstone is "good on the media". But being good on the media is supposed to be Mandelson's specialist subject. Does this mean Mandelson will copy Livingstone and start talking in a nasal voice and appearing on platforms with Gerry Adams?

More likely is that once an alternative to New Labour seems viable, it's welcomed by many people. If New Labour is unassailably popular, why do 46 per cent of people believe they've already broken their promises? Why is the Disability Rights Campaign receiving 200 letters a day from people worried that their benefit is being cut?

Far from being immensely popular, outside the world of business lunches and media-land it's hard to find anyone at all who likes Blair. But many people tolerate him, believing that nothing better is possible because everyone else adores him. He's like the annoying bloke at a party who no one tells to leave because everyone think's he's someone else's friend.

Meanwhile political commentators will continue telling us how much we love him, brushing aside inconvenient facts that prove otherwise, and concluding that we'd be more willing to show it if we could do so at Tescos. Mind you, it would be useful for Shirley Porter. She could fiddle the vote without ever having to leave the office.

Peña Gómez

The president who never was

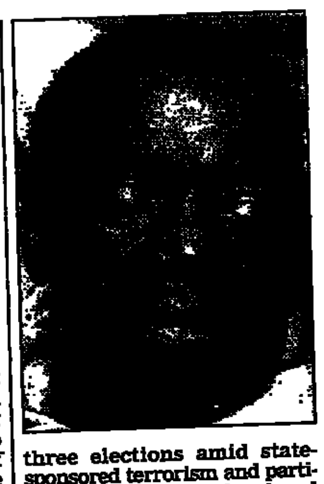
PEÑA Gómez, who has died aged 61 after a long struggle against cancer, would almost certainly have been president of the Dominican Republic were it not for electoral fraud and the fact that he was black. The Dominican Republic has been at daggers drawn with the neighbouring Caribbean state of Haiti since the last century, and Peña Gómez's blackness rendered him suspect in the eyes of the white-skinned and racist Dominican elite, who equate black skin with Haitianness and, by extension, barbarity.

In reality, Peña Gómez was of Haitian descent, even though born to poor parents in the Valverde province of the Dominican Republic. His parents fled across the frontier some six months later as the Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo ordered the massacre of an estimated 20,000 Haitians in the border zone. Peña Gómez was left behind, to be adopted by a Dominican couple, who brought him up first in a remote village, reached only by mule, and then in the town of Hato Nuevo.

Rural poverty forced him to work at an early age, first as a bootblack, but in 1952 he moved to the capital, Santo Domingo, where he interspersed education with a precocious talent for radio announcing. By the late 1950s he was active in the clandestine anti-Trujillo movement, which existed precariously in Santo Domingo, and in 1961, the year of Trujillo's assassination, he joined the Revolutionary Dominican Party (PRD), the largely exile-based social-democratic organisation founded and led by Juan Bosch.

In 1963 Peña Gómez, now training as a lawyer, won the powerful position of PRD secretary-general, after the electoral triumph of Bosch the preceding December. But the Bosch presidency was short-lived and in September the Dominican military overthrew and exiled the president. Peña Gómez remained in the Dominican Republic and was actively involved in the conspiracy which led, in April 1965, to near civil war. Together with a small number of dissident officers from the lower ranks and PRD militants, he dramatically seized control of Radio Santo Domingo, announced the collapse of the ruling interim government and called the people out into the streets. It was a broadcast that ensured his immortality in populist PRD mythology, but also earned the undying enmity of the country's conservative elite. In the event, the intervention of 23,000 US marines prevented outright war between armed PRD supporters and the right-wing military.

After the US invasion, the PRD entered the political wilderness as the American-supported Joaquín Balaguer won



three elections amid state-sponsored terrorism and partisan violence. Bosch abandoned the party in 1973, having lost faith in electoral politics, and Peña Gómez became PRD leader. Large-scale military intimidation resulted in another Balaguer victory in 1974, but in 1978 the PRD candidate, Antonio Guzmán, managed to defeat Balaguer despite a threatened military coup.

> With dissident officers he seized control of Radio Santo Domingo, announced the collapse of the government and called the people out into the streets

By now, however, the PRD had become torn apart by squabbling factions and Peña Gómez wisely decided to travel abroad, leaving Guzmán to face the unpalatable business of leading a PRD government. Another PRD administration, equally incompetent and corrupt, ensued and the party splintered still further. In the meantime, Peña Gómez had been elected Mayor of Santo Domingo in 1982 and had won a reputation as an honest and efficient administrator. As factions argued over the nomination for the 1986 elections, violence between Peña Gómez supporters and those of the rival Jacobo Majluta deteriorated into deadly gunfights and the armed occupation of the party headquarters.

In the event, Balaguer returned to power in 1986 as a sulking Peña Gómez refused to stand as Majluta's vice-presidential candidate. The same year, however, he became PRD president and thereafter increasingly prominent in the Latin American section of the Socialist International.

Peña Gómez's almost obsessional urge to win the presidency led him to split the PRD in 1989, forming his own Institutional Social Democratic Bloc for the 1990 elections. In the event, he received the nomination of a war-weary PRD and came a poor third behind the fraudulently elected Balaguer and Bosch.

Electoral cheating and outright cynicism were to rob him of power again in 1994, when Balaguer won the narrowest of victories amid widespread allegations of falsified electoral lists and scare tactics. Opposition television commercials accused Peña Gómez of planning to surrender Dominican sovereignty to neighbouring Haiti against a background of voodoo-inspired drum music. Balaguer's victory was so dubious that he was forced to settle for a two-year final term, and in 1996 it looked as if Peña Gómez, already weakened by cancer, might at last win the presidency.

It was not to be. He led in the first round of voting, only to be defeated by the most cynical manoeuvre of a cynical political system as Balaguer and Bosch — neither standing but both still hugely influential — settled their ancient feud to urge supporters to vote against Peña Gómez and for Leonel Fernández, the eventual victor.

A life-long victim of Dominican racism, Peña Gómez inspired support and antipathy in equal measure. An imposing, often intemperate orator, he could stir the dispossessed of Santo Domingo's slums as much as he alarmed the rich few. Although a moderate social democrat by instinct, he never overcame his personal mystique as the man who called the masses out into the streets in 1965. That, together with his black skin, was enough to make sure that the Dominican power-brokers and political class did everything needed to keep him out of the presidential palace.

James Ferguson

José Francisco Peña Gómez, politician, born March 6, 1937; died May 10, 1998

William Louther

Finding truth in a gesture

WILLIAM Louther, the American dancer, choreographer and teacher, who has died of cancer in London aged 56, played a role of inestimable importance in the early years of London Contemporary Dance Theatre. His impeccable technique and artistry, his greatness as a dancer, his beauty and star quality illuminated the repertoire, and inspired public and colleagues alike.

Born in New York, he studied acting at the High School of Performing Arts there, but after seeing a concert by the school's dance department that was the end of acting. As a 12-year-old he "decided instinctively that dance would be an ideal way to express myself".

His first teachers were not encouraging, but then Gertrude Schurr, who had been a dancer with Martha Graham in the 1930s, took him in hand. He did four classes a day for four years but said the real work was after school with Schurr. "She was like a drill sergeant. She told me I'd asked for it and I was going to get it!"

Later, at the Juilliard School, he studied ballet with Antony Tudor and Graham technique with Graham. It was Graham who taught him about truth in movement and convinced him that the important thing in choreography is purity of gesture, "the gesture that doesn't lie, the gesture that is not hidden". Tudor taught him about communication with an audience, of what dance means in the theatre, when he choreographed a *pas de deux* at Juilliard for Louther and Mercedes Ellington — Duke Ellington's granddaughter.

Louther's first professional performances were on Broadway. He then joined the Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre where he danced Ailey's glorious *Hermit Songs* in 1962 — which he would dance for LCDT in 1969. In the same year he appeared in Donald McKayle's brilliant *District Storyville*, set in the New Orleans red light and jazz area. With the Martha Graham company, he created roles in her *Circe* and *Part Real-Part Dream* of 1965.

In 1967 Louther came to London in *Black New World*, began to teach at the London School of Contemporary Dance, and made London a fairly permanent home. He joined LCDT in 1969 and was a leading dancer of what became a troupe of remarkable dancers in a no less remarkable repertoire. Louther choreographed his greatest dance, *Versalii Icones*, 1970, a remarkable realisation of the religious themes of Peter Maxwell Davies's score, in which he gave a performance of genius.

He danced the Penitent in LCDT's revival of Graham's *El Penitente* and also danced, with sensational effect, in a revival of Talley Beatty's *The Road of the Phoebe Snow*. He also appeared in the first performances of Robert Cohan's *Stages*, 1971, playing the hero with heroic power, both technical and emotional. "Someone who writes a dance work with William Louther in the leading role," wrote Andrew Porter, "can hardly go wrong."

Between 1972 and 1974 Louther directed the Batsheva Dance Company. He subsequently worked for a year with Welsh Dance Theatre and then pursued a freelance career.

For some years he withdrew from the limelight on account of indifferent health. His last years, however, were sunnier. He returned to teaching for several vocational schools in this country and was radiantly happy in his marriage to Sharon Atkins, a former local government worker who shared his love of dance. He had founded a small group, Dance Theatre Corporation, whose aim was to blend in performance contemporary dance and theatre.

He was a gentle, warm and lovely person, adored by his students, respected by his colleagues. And he had been one of the greatest black dancers of all time.

Mary Clarke

William Louther, dancer and choreographer, born January 22, 1942; died February 7, 1998



Star quality . . . William Louther with Linda Gibbs PHOTOGRAPH: ANTHONY CRICKMAY

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Ramakant Desai

THE cricketer Ramakant Desai, who has died of a heart attack aged 58, was the most successful Indian pace bowler in that decade from the end of the 1950s, before the arrival of the likes of Kapil Dev and Javagal Srinath. Slightly-built and lissom, the right-handed Desai claimed 74 wickets in 28 Tests and was affectionately known as "Tiny" in cricketing circles.

He played in an era when spinners held sway in Indian cricket, when captains did not have faith in pace bowlers. Thus was his achievement even more remarkable. He was impressive against cricketers like Hanif Mohammad, Rohan Kanhai and Peter May.

Desai made his debut in England in 1959 as a teenager in Nari Contractor's side. In India he had played his first Test against Jerry Alexander's West Indies in their 1958-59 tour. He was to go on to play in some 10 series, including tours to Australia and New Zealand.

Ramakant Desai was born and raised in Mumbai (Bombay). He began playing in junior league before graduating into the city's team. Then came his first appearance with the national team — and some argued the transition was too soon. He continued to play for Mumbai until the end of the 1960s and was popular at home and abroad.

Almost a quarter of a century later he became chairman of the Indian selectors — a controversial appointment. Many argued that he was not fit for one of the most responsible positions in Indian cricket. He was not easy with the press, and was often taken to task by journalists, even derided. He found it increasingly difficult to win arguments with his co-selectors.

Yet Desai never lost his cool. And, irrespective of his failure as the chairman of selectors, he had hardly any enemies. He was almost incapable of making foes.

The ill-health that was to kill him led him to resign the chairmanship two months ago. He is survived by his wife Anagha and their son.

Haresh Pandya

Ramakant Bhikaji Desai, cricketer, born June 20, 1939; died April 27, 1998

Birthdays

Sir Crispin Agnew, explorer and genealogist, 54; **Clive Barnes**, drama critic, 71; **Rosie Boycott**, editor, the Express, 47; **Eileen Diss**, theatre, film and television designer, 67; **Robert Earnshaw**, racehorse trainer, 39; **Colin Ford**, director, National Museum of Wales, 64; **Peter Gabriel**, singer, 48; **Dr Jane Glover**, conductor, 49; **Tony Hide**, racehorse trainer, 59; **Harvey Keitel**, actor, 59; **Sir Laurence Kirwan**, archaeologist, 91; **Tasmin Little**, violinist, 33; **Richard Madeley**, television show host, 42; **Tim Pigott-Smith**, actor, 52; **Gerry Sutcliffe**, Labour MP, 45; **Sir William Utting**, chairman, National Institute for Social Work, 67; **Zoe Wanamaker**, actress, 49; **Stevie Wonder**, singer, 47.

A Country Diary

THE WREKIN: Chiff-chaff, chaff-chaff... It's four in the morning and this warbler named after its stubbornly minimalist song seems to be questioning my sanity. And well it might. On the very edge of the darkest hour I'm wandering the tracks up the Wrekin in the rain. In the wet streets and gardens of the sleeping town, blackbirds have been singing for an hour or more. Here, their song, together with the thrushes, robins, tits, warblers and wrens has a dream-like quality, an intensity which cuts through dark trees like audio flashlights. Because of the rain and low cloud, dawn does not "break" but insinuates itself from the east in a gradual bleaching of the sky. Somewhere above the clouds the moon is full, powering spring tides of sea and land. Migrant birds from the south sweep north with Mediterranean and African voices. They and the residents divide the woods into territories. Now they are here, now they stake their claim to the world. They sing from the darkness when there's not enough light to risk flight nor risk of predators taking flight against them, before the all-consuming business of mating, nest-building and food gathering for hatching broods. They sing with an urgent energy from the core of their being, each according to its own, to summon the beginning of day, of season, of year. In the old calendar this is Beltane, the true may-day before time was shuffled backwards a couple of weeks to suit human interests. But wild Nature sings to its own ancient rhythms. Without these songs it would not be dawn, day would not begin, the woods would not wake in the rain and we would sleep in ignorance forever under our orange lights.

PAUL EVANS

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

IN THE obituary of Alfred McKenzie, Page 21, May 9, we referred to four pilots of the 99th fighter squadron sinking a German destroyer while flying "P-47 Lightnings". The aircraft were P-47 Thunderbolts (the Lightning was designated P-38) of the black 332nd Fighter Group, and the incident, in Trieste harbour on June 25, 1944, occurred shortly before the 99th Fighter Squadron was transferred to the Group (source: Journal of the American Aviation Historical Society, Winter 1975).

IN AN article headed, Staring death in the face, Page 4 of our Saturday section, May 9, we gave November 1, 1940, as the date of the biggest German air-raid on Coventry. The date (of what was the worst air-raid on Britain of the second world war) was November 14, 1940.

ON PAGE 7, Media Guardian, May 11, we said, "only 0.01 per cent of National Union of Journalists members are black". If that were correct, the NUJ would have just two black members. The NUJ has a membership (working journalists in UK) of approximately 22,000; ethnic minority members identified by monitoring of membership applications, approximately 240 (although the NUJ believes that is probably an underestimation as some are probably missed in the monitoring process). Therefore it is not 0.01 per cent but around 1.1 per cent, which the NUJ thinks is representative of the media generally.

IN OUR G2 cover story, Jamaica is having a ball, May 11, we said that Wales (unlike Jamaica) had "never qualified for the World Cup" [finals]. That is wrong. Wales played in the World Cup finals in Sweden in 1958 (see Brian Glanville: *The Story of the World Cup*)

A MAP, Page 11, Education Guardian, yesterday, incorrectly showed Norway as a founder member of the European single currency. Norway is not part of the EU and the accompanying article correctly did not mention Norway.

IN AN article headed, Stalker jailed for terrorising woman, Page 10, May 9, we incorrectly named the author of the novel, *Night Prey*, as William Sandford. The author is in fact John Sandford, a pseudonym used by the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist John Camp.

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor, Ian Mayes, by telephoning 0171 239 9589 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Surface mail to Readers' Editor, The Guardian, 119, Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Fax: 0171 239 9897. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk

Death Notices

EARDLEY-WILMOT. On the 11th May 1998, peacefully at home after a long illness, Hazel Mary, aged 88 years of Wilson's, North Molton. Cremation at the North Devon Crematorium, Barnstaple on Tuesday, 19th May at 11.30am. No flowers please. All enquiries to J. Westacott & Son, Funeral Directors. Tel. 01769 572478.

SARCH. David Joseph Anthony, 27.10.40 - 9.5.98. On May 9th suddenly, at home, of a heart attack. Loved immensely by Ros, Louise and Terri, his family and all his many friends throughout the world. A highly respected lawyer and advisor - a great loss to his profession. Mr. Sarch will be profoundly missed. His funeral will be held at The Priory Church of St. Gregory the Great, 10 St James Square, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, on Saturday 16th May 1998 at 11.30am. Flowers very welcome to Selim, Smith & Co., 74 Prestbury Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL52 2DJ. Tel (01242) 525383.

To place your announcement telephone 0171 713 4567 or fax 0171 713 4129 between 9am and 3pm Mon-Fri.

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صكذا من الاصل

Analysis
Consultants



Israel's feather-boa war
8

The doctors' dilemma

The Government is restive over 'fat-cat consultants'. But figures show they work around a 55-hour week for the NHS, and the hours are growing. So why are ministers cooking up a problem? Sarah Boseley reports



HOSPITAL consultants used to be untouchable. Their skills, knowledge, hard work and devotion to duty were once unquestioned. So were their salaries. But all that appears to have changed. Noises are now being made in government circles about "fat cats" — consultants who allegedly short change the public purse by allowing their private work to encroach on their contractual NHS duties.

Radical proposals have been suggested by political sources who appear to be not far removed from Alan Milburn, the Health Minister. They include the "naming and shaming" of consultants who do not do the full week's work for which the NHS pays them, and take home more than the maximum they are allowed to earn from the private sector.

Threats of such public humiliation do not go down well with consultants who say almost all of them work far longer hours for the NHS than people in other professions. They point to the much higher salaries that professionals with equivalent years of training, expertise and responsibility would pick up in industry. And they remind critics of the recruitment problems in some consultancies such as anaesthetics and paediatrics.

Ironically, it was the consultants' committee of the British Medical Association that stirred the waters by suggesting to the Department of Health that it was time to make changes to the contract which has existed since the NHS was formed in 1948. Before that time, private patients provided the consultant's income and many would give their services free to the poor in charity and university hospitals in their spare time.

When the NHS arrived, consultants were anxious not to be beholden to the state. A deal was struck whereby they were entitled to have their own private practices even though they became salaried NHS employees.

There are now three kinds of contract: part-time, maximum part-time and whole time. The controversy surrounds the latter two. A consultant on a whole-time contract receives a full NHS salary, but may not earn more than one tenth more from private work. On the maximum part-time contract, the NHS take-home pay is ten elevenths of a full salary, but there is no ceiling on private practice.

This somewhat idiosyncratic arrangement allows the consultant in effect to work out the best personal deal. One source said it would generally become apparent which would be more lucrative after three years in a consultancy. In some areas, such as paediatrics or radiology, for instance, there might be less private work available than there is in others, such as anaesthetics or surgery.

The basic consultant's salary starts at £44,780, although some trusts may entice people in shortage areas with higher sums. It rises annually in five stages to £57,800.

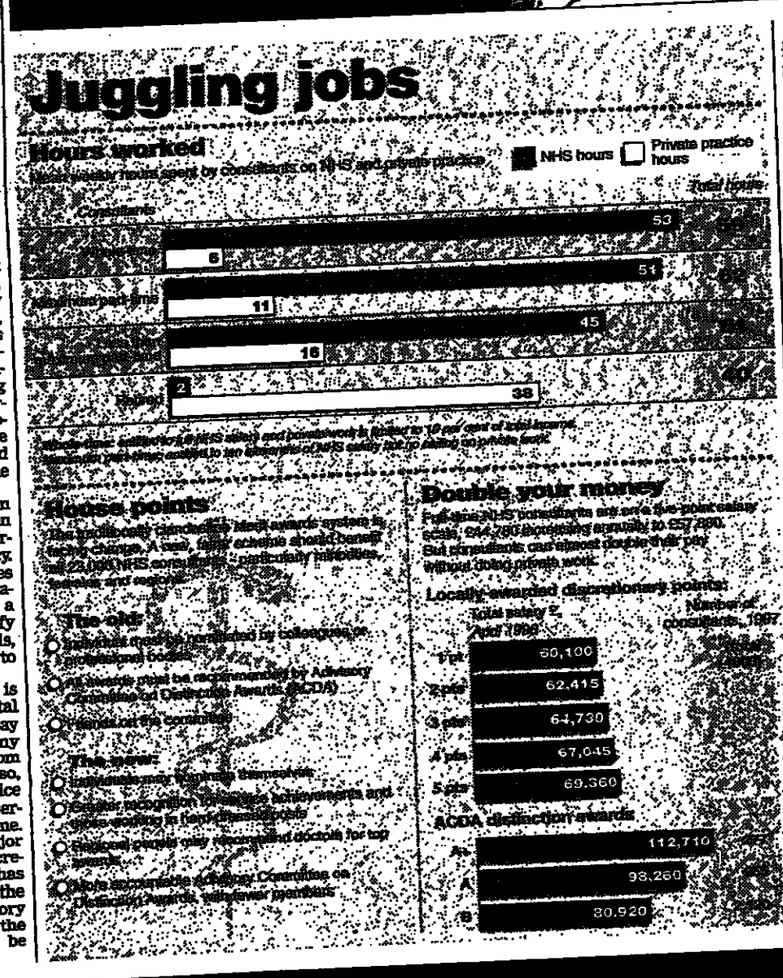
But there is more for some. A special committee hands out merit awards annually for consultants who have served with distinction in the NHS. These have been very controversial in the past — only recently have the names of the recipients been published.

These awards are significant sums, added to annual salaries. The Spens committee, which set them up in 1948, intended them to give consultants the opportunity "to earn income comparable with the highest which could be earned in other professions" and keep them in the NHS(1). At the apex is the A+ award, which is worth £54,910 a year, bringing the very top NHS consultant's salary to over £112,000.

CRITICS of the system said that the committee, made up chiefly of consultants, NHS employers and members of the Royal Colleges, favoured high-flying academics over hard-slogging consultants. There was a perception that research and published papers counted for more than devotion to patients and that nominations were made on the old boy network.

Following pressure from Milburn, changes have been made to ensure greater fairness and transparency. Women and ethnic minorities are to get greater consideration, excellent service in a hard-pressed post will qualify for one of the highest awards, and consultants will be able to nominate themselves.

It has been argued that it is fair for top teaching hospital doctors to get this extra pay because they have little if any chance of earning sums from private practice. It may be so, but this sort of rough justice does not improve public perception of the awards scheme. It is now undergoing major reform and the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, has recently asked whether the membership of the advisory committee that hands out the money ought not to be reviewed too.



Nobody denies that the vast majority of consultants work long and hard for the NHS. Their hours are not spelled out in their contracts. Both the whole-time and maximum part-time contracts stipulate that a consultant shall spend "substantially the whole of your professional time" in the NHS. There is a reference to a "notional" ten half-days a week, with a half-day being the equivalent of three hours. But basic mathematics has no role in these calculations, because, argue consultants, they are often on call all night three nights a week and their half days can last a good deal longer than the notional variety. All the studies show that consultants work around 56 hours a week on average for the NHS. They say their hours are getting longer all the time as extra duties and tasks are heaped upon them — such as training juniors.

But the 10 per cent extra on top for whole-timers — in other words, around five hours of private practice — is almost as often exceeded as the NHS hours are. A study by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission published in 1994 (2) found that whole-time consultants were working 53 hours in the NHS each week on average and six hours in private practice. Some hospital trusts, often in a bid to secure the skills they need, have torn up the NHS contract, as they are entitled to do, and given their whole-time consultants leave to do as much private work as they choose.

Why should it matter to the government if consultants are doing extra private work? Alan Milburn seems to be mostly concerned about the tiny minority who skip NHS work in order to head for the private clinic.

"The vast majority of NHS consultants more than fulfil their contractual commitments to the NHS. It is in the interests of the medical profession, as well as patients and taxpayers, to get the minority who do not do so into line," he told one newspaper(3). Namning and shaming is said to be one option for dealing with them.

James Johnson, chairman of the BMA consultants' committee, feels there is hardly an issue here. "He is saying if someone is clearly not doing what he is paid for, he wants to come down on them like a ton of bricks," he said. "I say fine — I'm not trying to protect these guys, but if we have got 95 per cent doing a lot more than they are paid for, we don't want to turn them off for the sake of catching the 5 per cent.

"THE hospital service would collapse if they did only what they are contracted to do," he said. "It should be done in a way that doesn't anger people." Forcing consultants to clock on would be a disaster.

If certain consultants were short-changing the NHS, said Mr Johnson, it was up to their immediate employer, the NHS Trust, to do something about it.

There may be other matters troubling the Department of Health. The European working time directive stipulates a working week of 48 hours. The implications of this for doctors will have to be considered. A meeting to discuss it with the BMA is scheduled for June. And then there is some possible political colouring. Old Labour — and Frank Dobson is usually considered to hail from those ranks — was implacably opposed to private medicine. It has been suggested that he would like to see the 10 per cent ceiling on private practice rigidly enforced.

The BMA raised the matter with the department last year because the consultants committee had decided, after much debate, in favour of quite the opposite view — that it was time to get rid of the 10 per cent limit altogether, to allow consultants to do as much private work as they wanted. They also wanted the contract changed to restrict the amount of extra duties managers can require of consultants.

"For a year we have been unable to get the Department of Health to come up with any change whatsoever that they would like to include in the contract," said Mr Johnson. "They say they are thinking about it."

Sources: (1) The Consultants Handbook, BMA; (2) Private Medical Services, Monopolies and Mergers Commission, Feb 1994; (3) Sunday Times, May 10, 1998.
Graphics sources: Doctors' and Dentists' review body report, 1998/99; Hospital Doctor, April 23, 1998; Private Medical Services, Monopolies and Mergers Commission, Feb 1994
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FinanceGuardian

Body Shop founder quits as chief executive ● Asia and US sales dive

Roddick steps aside

Roger Cowe

ANITA and Gordon Roddick yesterday brought in two outsiders to revive the flagging fortunes of their cosmetics company, Body Shop, as they disclosed plummeting sales in the US and Asia.

Despite preparing for the sale of half the US business, they insisted they will remain in day-to-day executive roles as joint chairs of the company they founded 22 years ago, and said the social and environmental values would remain "non-negotiable".

Anita Roddick relinquished the title of chief executive in favour of Frenchman, Patrick Gournay. He has been recruited from the French food group, Danone, where he runs a division embracing north and south America.

The Body Shop founders also launched a joint venture which they hope will solve the company's long-running difficulties in the US.

Adrian Bellamy, an American retail executive, will take over as chief executive of the US chain and will be able to buy half the business in four years' time if he returns it to profit.

Mr Bellamy has been on the Body Shop board as a non-executive since the start of last year. He is also a non-executive director of other retailers, including The Gap.

Gordon Roddick said: "The things we have done in the US haven't worked. We need strong branded retail management. Adrian has a very significant chance of success".

The cosmetics retailer lost £5 million in the US last year, following slightly larger deficits in each of the previous two years. Total sales in the US fell by 2 per cent last year, to £98 million, despite a slight increase in shop numbers to 290. Comparable stores saw sales dip by 5 per cent, following a 3 per cent drop in 1997 as the company continued to suffer in the face of stiff competition from chains such as Bath and Body Works.

"No British retailer has ever made inroads into the US market", Mr Roddick said. "It's a culture we have never really understood."

Mr Bellamy believes the chain needs to slash the product range, improve the shops and boost service levels. He also sees the need for more promotion and lower costs. The company would not comment on the prospects for jobs.

Body Shop has also been suffering in Asia where 75 new stores were opened last year. But sales failed to keep up with shop numbers as economic troubles hit the region and consumers grew tired of the shops, especially in Japan, where sales in comparable stores were 19 per cent lower than the previous year.

We have never really understood the culture of the US market
Gordon Roddick

The group did manage to restore some sales growth in Europe. But profits fell in the UK and the rest of Europe as well as in Australia and New Zealand.

Total sales from the 1,600 mostly-franchised shops around the world were £604 million, 5 per cent higher than in 1997. But profits stagnated at £38 million.

Mrs Roddick said the company did not have the skills to restore growth. "We were a shop-opening company. There was a huge lack of serious thinking".

Her husband said the six-month exercise in 1996, exploring the possibility of buying back the company from shareholders, had made clear the lack of management skills at the top. "We realised we couldn't develop the business without strengthening management at a senior level".

But he insisted he and his wife would remain fully involved and set out an ambitious objective: "We wish to be the number one global niche retailer in the world within the next five years".

Cover story, G2



Anita Roddick (above) and her husband Gordon will stay as joint chairs of the company PHOTOGRAPH: STEPHEN DUPONT

Notebook

Hopes pinned on overdue makeover



Alex Brummer

ONE of the really difficult decisions for any executive is deciding the right time to change direction. It is clear that much of the fizz, which allowed Anita Roddick to grow the Body Shop from one store on Duke Street in Brighton in 1976 to 1,549 shops worldwide, has gone and the company needs a makeover. But has she acted in time?

Looking at the numbers, one would probably say yes. Retail sales are up 5 per cent and turnover (that is supplies to franchises and company stores) up by 8 per cent, both respectable amounts. Profits are flat, but this is not yet a Laura Ashley, Liberty or even a Next situation before David Wolfson was called in.

Moreover, the Roddicks may have started to feel the heat from some institutional shareholders but have at least managed to anticipate requirements by bringing in a chief executive with North American experience — Patrick Gournay from Danone.

This is not to minimise the problems. To keep the business growing at a rapid pace over the past two decades Ms Roddick largely deployed franchising; meaning, generally, that other people expend the capital.

The downside risk, however, is that as the business matures the franchisees decline to put in the investment in mondernisation and service required; there is no property or leasehold back-up to support the balance sheet; management control over the outlets is less and good margins do not translate directly into the bottom line.

Then there are the imitators. Body Shop was genuinely the first to recognise the value of natural ingredients in cosmetics. But, as other UK pioneers have shown over the decades, being first doesn't necessarily make you the most financially successful.

The sophisticates of cosmetics and toiletries retailing, primarily Boots and Marks & Spencer, have moved in on the Roddick territory, forcing Body Shop into finding ever more exotic products like the hemp range, sold in tin cans, with allegations against multinationals on the label.

Finally, there is the US. There the damage is much less than it could have been. Body Shop's estimated loss in the US over the last year is £6.8 million, which is an unnecessary burden to carry but fairly minor stuff compared to the losses accumulated by other UK companies in North America over the years — including M&S in Canada and Brooks Brothers.

In a move to extricate Body Shop from this, joint venture partner Adrian Bellamy will be given a degree of ownership to help sort matters out.

The changes at Body Shop could be just in time. Ethical businesses remain fashionable and Body Shop stands up well among modern brands. It is the manufacturing skills (does the Body Shop need to make its own product?), the retailing (the size of the chain and the franchising) the brand and the packaging of the basic products which need updating.

That will require much more aggressive management and some heavy reorganisation and rationalisation costs in the year ahead: despite the grudging response of the share prices to changes, the game might not yet be up.

Soros shove

THE peripatetic financier George Soros may soon be claiming a place in the pantheon of Labour heroes alongside the Webbs', Beveridge and Peter Mandelson.

Having delivered the reputation of the Tories as sound managers of the currency into the hands of the Opposition in September 1992, when sterling was ejected from the exchange rate mechanism, he by all accounts is at it again.

This time his assault on sterling, which began when the currency hit its peak of DM 3.1090 on March 31, is again exactly what Labour needs: but this time it is in government.

The Achilles heel for Gordon Brown has been the overvaluation of sterling which has crippled exporters, put manufacturing into recession and given the shadow front bench team a feather with which to whip the Chancellor over his economic policy.

Nothing appeared able to turn the tide. This has become the speciality of the hedge funds. It was their activity in East Asia last June, which first exposed the weaknesses of the dollar-linked currencies of Thailand, South Korea, Indonesia *et al*, and it paid off handsomely.

Similarly, if the Wall Street Journal is correct, Mr Soros has spotted the overvaluation of the pound. Once the euro was fully in place, the pound's status as a safe haven quickly unravelled and it has seen a 7 per cent tumble against the mark.

This is highly convienient in several respects. It comes in time to give exporters a fighting chance of getting back into global markets. But it will also improve Labour's political choices. As sterling comes down in value it will make it easier for Britain eventually to join the euro area at a competitive rate.

Reports from Strasbourg and Brussels, where Paddy Ashdown and Gordon Brown are doing the rounds, suggest that Brussels is inclined to waive the two-years in the exchange rate mechanism. This would to ease the way to UK entry as well as improve Britain's status on the policy making Euro-X committee — if the political decision to press ahead with a referendum and UK entry is taken.

This may not be the timetable Mr Brown envisaged, but Mr Soros is smoothing matters along.

Human rights force way on to agenda

JULIA FINCH on how protesters make their point to shareholders

BURMA'S pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi will this week accuse Premier Oil of playing an active role in keeping the country's military junta in power.

In a video smuggled out to be relayed at Premier's annual general meeting the Nobel peace laureate will tell the company's owners that it is "doing a great disservice to democracy" by giving moral and financial support to the country's military government. Premier Oil will not be screening the video. Her words will be transmitted to the meeting by a group of activist shareholders who have invested in the company to air their grievances, including the World Development Movement, the Burma Action Group and the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs.

Premier Oil is not the only company that will this week try to complete its annual formalities against a barrage of protest. Today it is the turn of mining group Rio Tinto Zinc.

Shareholders attending its annual meeting at the Queen Elizabeth II Centre will have to fight through at least three groups of banner-waving protesters. Once inside, the formal questions are likely to be dominated by demands for explanations about claims that the company fails to recognise the land rights of local communities in Indonesia and the Philippines and that it is destroying the coastline with a mining project in Madagascar and paying only 2 per cent local tax.



To complete the week, protesters will be out in force at shipping group P&O's annual meeting on Friday to protest against the construction of a mega-port, eight times the size of Liverpool, on a stretch of beautiful coastline near Bombay.

The number of protests, and the way they are being professionally managed, has led some companies to call for annual meetings to be abandoned and replaced with regional briefings to allow more "ordinary" shareholders to attend.

Few companies are safe from the threat of protest. Even investment and insurance companies have been targeted, to justify their holdings in companies accused of involvement in pollution and human rights abuses or arms trading. Companies hate the publicity. They employ armies of security staff, and chief executives and chairmen take training in how to control an unruly crowd.

Privately, many companies would like to impose a minimum shareholding on those able to attend their meetings. A 1,000-share investment would require a substantial and unjustifiable investment for many of the protest groups, but would not stop the increasingly imaginative photo-opportunities staged outside the meetings.

Some companies are adopting other methods, which, although they may not stop the committed activist, can intimidate some shareholders. Lord Hanson was the first to stage-manage his annual meetings, targeted by native Americans demonstrating against alleged violations of land rights. He rehearsed answers to every conceivable question and the answers were flashed before his eyes on a teleprompter at the right moment.

More recently NatWest has started to display signs of being control-freaks. Many of the shareholders who wanted to ask questions on the bank's performance last year will undoubtedly have been fazed by the having to walk to a spot-lit microphone and have their image flashed on to vast screens at the front of the hall.

But some companies still have serious problems with crowd control. Two weeks ago, at the British Aerospace agm, shareholders were outnumbered by security men and protesters from the Campaign against Arms Trade, who staged a "die-in" outside the meeting and then harangued chairman Bob Bauman when it started. Meanwhile a group of Kurds and their supporters held a minute's silence on behalf of murdered relatives.

The board, as has become BAe's custom, were protected from the baying crowd by six rows of potted plants and company staff.

Even so, by the time Mr Bauman wound up the meeting around 80 protesters had been be forcibly ejected.

Roll of dishonour

Company	Protesters	Issue
• Rio Tinto	• World Development Movement • Survival • Aboriginal Society of St Columbia • Friends of the Earth	• Local community rights in Indonesia • Local community rights in the Philippines • Alleged tax avoidance in Madagascar
• Shell	• World Development Movement	• Environmental/human rights condemnation of Nigerian operations
• P&O	• World Development Movement	• Local community rights in India
• Premier Oil	• World Development Movement	• Protesting military regime in Burma/link with oil investment
• Nestlé	• World Development Movement	• Alleged violations of international code on breastmilk substitutes
• ICI	• Friends of the Earth	• Pollution on Teesside

£175 tip costs analyst his job

Tony May

A FORMER City analyst, who helped two flatmates avoid a loss of a mere £175 on a share stake by giving them inside information, was expelled yesterday by the Securities and Futures Authority.

Graham Friend, a small companies research analyst at Merrill Lynch Pierce Fenner & Smith, told his flatmates he would be recommending in a research report the purchase of shares in WEW, a Glasgow-based discount retailer which was a Merrill Lynch client.

As a result they bought shares at 16½p and made a paper profit when the shares rose to 18p.

But, a month later, Mr Friend was told confidentially that the next day WEW was going to announce a shock £2 million loss.

He immediately contacted his flatmates and told them to sell their shares, which they did. The shares fell nearly 14 per cent the next day.

One source said: "This is a sad case of a very bright young man ruining his career by showing off."

Apart from breaking SFA rules, he also breached Merrill Lynch's policy on confidentiality.

He was also required to deal in shares solely through an employee account at the firm but admitted that on one occasion he dealt through a friend's account held elsewhere.

BBC postpones launch of digital TV for all to autumn

Glimpses only for public as elite get full picture, writes CHRIS BARRIE

THE BBC has been forced to postpone the launch of its key digital television channel from this summer to the autumn in a striking example of the difficulties that are dogging broadcasters' efforts to introduce multi-channel TV.

The service will be seen only by a limited number of "opinion makers" this summer, not reaching a wider audience until later because of a scarcity of the set-top boxes needed to convert today's TV sets into digital receivers.

Instead, the BBC plans to unveil glimpses of its digital services at mainline railway stations fed by signals from transmitters at Crystal Palace in south London. The demonstrations will go some way to defusing criticism of the costs of digital TV and complaints that it is available only to a few élite commentators.

The BBC ordered the limited launch because ordinary viewers will probably not be able to find set-top boxes in their high streets until after the summer. They will, however, be provided to politicians, BBC governors, media correspondents and members of the Independent Television Commission.

The moves underline the extent to which digital TV's multi-channel world is being delayed as broadcasters grapple with the technology and marketing campaigns aimed at extolling the virtues of pay-TV.

Satellite broadcaster Sky's summer launch of multi-channel TV will be limited to an unspecified number of longstanding customers, while Cable and Wireless Communications said on Monday that its marketing campaign would only go national next year — months later than originally planned.

The dawning of the digital age shows every sign of dragging on into 1999. Although Sky and British Digital Broadcasting, its terrestrial rival, are promising the mother of all battles for subscribers this autumn, both expect take-up to be slow.

The BBC, which is relying on cable, satellite and terrestrial "platforms" to transmit its digital programming, has little option but to bide its time. But it appears to have problems of its own.

From June the BBC will broadcast its two existing channels, One and Two, in both analogue and digital formats. Digital versions will include widescreen programming. News 24 will also be on air.

But BBC Choice will only begin operation in the autumn. The "BBC's gateway to digital television and all that it offers" had been due to be broadcasting this summer from 4pm to midnight Monday to Friday and 9am to midnight at weekends.

Now viewers will see promotional material — a "barker" channel — broadcast on a continuous loop interspersed with some World Cup football matches broadcast in widescreen.

The BBC previously said it would launch digital TV services whenever the platforms were ready. However, the broadcasters' determination to include widescreen programming in BBC Choice apparently delayed the service's plans.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.509	Germany 2.8291	Malaysia 6.409	Singapore 2.81
Austria 19.87	Greece 494.06	Malta 0.62	South Africa 8.07
Belgium 58.27	Hong Kong 12.31	Netherlands 3.1717	Spain 238.73
Canada 2.28	India 64.836	New Zealand 2.96	Sweden 12.18
Cyprus 0.83	Ireland 1.1225	Norway 11.83	Switzerland 2.36
Denmark 10.82	Israel 5.989	Portugal 288.70	Turkey 994,220
Finland 8.66	Italy 2,808	Saudi Arabia 6.02	USA 1.5993
France 9.457			

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صكذا من الاصل

صكنا من الاصل

Chris Hawkins expects Henry Cecil's colt to underline his Derby credentials in the Dante Stakes at York

Dr Fong can cut down his rivals

IF RECENT ante-post betting moves are anything to go by, Dr Fong will win this afternoon's Grosvenor Casinos Dante Stakes at York.

Bookmakers have been busy cutting the price of Henry Cecil's colt — Hill's slashed him from 16–1 to 10–1 on Monday — in anticipation of victory this afternoon.

On paper, Dr Fong has something to find with some talented opponents, including the 2,000 Guineas third Border Arrow, last year's Racing Post Trophy winner Saratoga Springs and the Royal Lodge winner Teapot Row. Dr Fong was lightly raced as a two-year-old and contested just two minor events, winning both, but his reputation as Cecil's leading Derby contender has gathered momentum in recent weeks and he made a satisfactory reappearance when taking the Newmarket Stakes 12 days ago.

He looked far from fully wound-up then, but led over a furlong out and kept on under pressure to beat Sensory by half a length. As promising as that performance was, it did not match the effort of Border Arrow, who finished in eye-catching style to take third behind King Of Kings in the Guineas.

Border Arrow, generally on offer at 8–1 for the Derby, is a gangly colt who keeps surprising his trainer Ian Balding. On his work at home he is nothing out of the ordinary, but on the racecourse he is a different proposition.

He should be well suited by the mile-and-a-quarter today, but there must be a worry that this race will come too soon for him after his considerable exertions in the Guineas.

Saratoga Springs comes from Aidan O'Brien's stable and on the evidence of his efforts last season is one of the toughest horses around. He was hard driven from a long way out to win the Racing Post Trophy by a short-head from Mudeer.

Teapot Row was not overbig as a juvenile, but had plenty of ability and a smart turn of foot, using it to win the Royal Lodge Stakes at Ascot when City Honours finished third.

By Generous, Teapot Row should be at home over middle distances, but whether he has the scope of some of his rivals is open to doubt.

City Honours has plenty of size about him and could come into his own this season after looking to be short of the top class as a juvenile. He took a long time to get the hang of things in his races last season, either that or he lacks pace. We shall see today.

Greenlander, 14th in the 2,000 Guineas, makes up the field, but unless Clive Britain can work his peculiar brand of magic, looks out of his depth.

Dr Fong (3.10) is the selection to show that the Derby support is not misplaced. His stable does not make many mistakes and there is a strong belief that this colt is something special.



Cecil . . . few mistakes

In the Hambleton Handicap, it may be worth giving Gulf Shaadi (3.40) another chance after a disappointing run at Sandown last time. Prior to that he had run a cracker when second to Tumbleweed Ridge at Newmarket.

The Newcastle Conditions Stakes brings out Red Sea, who was favourite to make a winning debut at Newmarket, but swerved leaving the stalls and unseated Richard Quinn.

Sheer Viking (4.10) won the race in some style, looking a Royal Ascot juvenile in the making, but Red Sea could be a big threat if co-operating this time.

Bahr boosts Oaks hopes

Chris Hawkins

AFTER the Godolphin filly Bahr booked her place in the Vodafone Oaks with victory in yesterday's Musidora Stakes at York, all the signs are that the 1,000 Guineas winner Cape Verdi will run in the Vodafone Derby.

No statement to this effect was made by Simon Crisford, racing manager to Godolphin, but logic dictates this course of action after his emphatic assertion that Bahr will go for the Oaks. It is possible the two fillies will take each other on in the same race, but it would make little sense and Cape Verdi is out to 9–4 favourite from 15–8 for the Oaks with the Tote, who cut Bahr to 5–2 from 6–1.

Bahr got home by a neck from Midnight Line in the Musidora, getting tired in the final half furlong, according to Frankie Dettori, and allowing the favourite to get back at her.

Midnight Line made the running, but did not stretch her field and the time was over three seconds outside the race average.

"We know Cape Verdi is brilliant, but Bahr is very special too," said Crisford. "I would think she'll definitely go for the Oaks, but a decision about Cape Verdi won't be made until May 30 at the earliest."

Champion jockey Kieren Fallon rode the first two winners on the card, but was suspended for three days, starting May 21, after being found guilty of irresponsible riding on Bawsian in the Shepherd Handicap. The offence was not regarded as serious, however, and Bawsian kept the race.

Savill takes the chair

Ken Oliver

PETER SAVILL is the new chairman of the British Horseracing Board. The multi-millionaire's unopposed appointment was warmly received yesterday by practically everyone within the industry.

Tristram Ricketts, chief executive of the BHB, said: "We look forward to working with Peter very much indeed. To coin a phrase, he certainly won't allow the turf to grow under his feet."

Savill believes that racing is seriously underfunded and his supporters feel that he is the man who has the energy and business acumen to extract extra money from the Government and bookmakers that racehorse owners feel is vital.

Matthew McCloy, the BHB's industry committee chairman, added: "I am absolutely delighted.

"It's a great day for racing and the BHB and we now have the best team in place to take forward the financial plan which Peter was so instrumental in developing."

York Jackpot card

	CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
2.05	Brave Edge	Stalled (nap)
2.35	Yabint El Sultan	Yabint El Sultan (nb)
3.10	Dr Fong (nap)	Border Arrow
3.40	Gulf Shaadi	Russian Music
4.10	Sheer Viking (nb)	Sheer Viking
4.40	Totem Dancer	Totem Dancer

Left-handed, U-shaped course of 2m with run-in of nearly 5f. Straight 6f.
Going: Good. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Draw: No advantage.
Long distance travellers: Russian Music (3.40) Miss Gay Kelleway, Dorset, 276 miles.
Seven day winners: None.
Blinkered and visored first time: None.

2.05 GROSVENOR CASINO LEEDS SPRINT HANDICAP (CH4)
5f £19,088 (17 declared)

Betting: 5–1 Stalled, 7–1 Canovas Heart, Double Oscar, 8–1 Blessingindisguise, 10–1 Twice As Sharp, 12–1 Brave Edge, Lamarita, Lago Di Varano, Cumbrian Caruso.

2.35 GROSVENOR CASINOS MIDDLETON STAKES (CH4)
1m 2f 85yds £12,212 (7 declared)

Betting: 9–4 Kammist, 3–1 Yabint El Sultan, 9–2 Heavenly Ray, Star Precision, 8–1 Tempting Prospect, 10–1 Rich In Love.

3.10 GROSVENOR CASINOS DANTE STAKES 3YO (CH4)
1m 2f 85yds £77,250 (6 declared)

Betting: 5–2 Dr Fong, 11–4 Border Arrow, 3–1 City Honours, 9–2 Saratoga Springs, 8–1 Teapot Row, 25–1 Greenlander.

3.40 GROSVENOR HAMBLETON RATED HANDICAP (CH4)
7f 202yds £15,468 (9 declared)

Betting: 4–1 Ramooz, 9–2 Gulf Shaadi, Jo Mell, 8–1 Showboat, Wannaplantatree, 7–1 Mignonne, 8–1 Bold Words, 12–1 Russian Music, 16–1 West-A-Minute.

4.10 GROSVENOR CASINO NEWCASTLE CONDITIONS STAKES 2YO
6f £7,850 (5 declared)

Betting: 6–4 Sheer Viking, 3–1 Red Sea, 7–2 Principality, 6–1 Caballon, 8–1 Sydney Sakehands.

4.40 GROSVENOR CASINO MANCHESTER HANDICAP
1m 5f 194yds £7,635 (12 declared)

Betting: 11–2 Outset, 6–1 Thornby Park, 7–1 Star Rage, Belliamo, 8–1 Little Acorn, Dowdon Star, Campaspe.

Huntingdon (N.H.) tonight

	KEN OLIVER	TOP FORM
6.05	Look In The Mirror	Shers Delight
6.35	Dalmatown	Mike's Music
7.05	Wade Road	Wade Road
7.35	Muskora	Muskora
8.05	Broadwater Boy	Erins Bar
8.35	Bajan	Classic Eagle

Oval, right-handed track of 1½m with 200yds run-in. Perfectly flat with easy bends.
Going: Good to firm. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Long distance travellers: Muskora (7.35) S Shirley-Beavan, Borders, 283 miles.
Seven day winners: None.
Blinkered first time: 8.35 Nikolas Nephew, Rouse Finale. Visored: 6.05 Chopin.

6.05 LADIES EVENING SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE (SKY)
2m 5f 110yds £1,898 (21 declared)

Betting: 5–1 Look In The Mirror, 6–1 Pingo Hill, 7–1 Shers Delight, 8–1 John Tufty, 10–1 Ray River, 12–1 Chopin, 14–1 Star Of David, Sands Point, Nirvana Princess, Orchard King.

6.35 NORWICH & PETERBOROUGH NOV HCAP HURDLE (SKY)
3m 2f £2,460 (14 declared)

Betting: 5–1 Riches To Rags, 6–1 Sun Alert, 7–1 Quiet Moments, 8–1 Second Fiddle, Saucy Bun, 10–1 Kingsland Taverner, Zaison, Charlot Man.

7.05 BRAYBROOK NOVICE CHASE (SKY)
2m 110yds £3,043 (6 declared)

Betting: 4–5 Wade Road, 7–4 Barford Sovereign, 14–1 Pridewood Picker, 16–1 Lislaughtin Abbey, 20–1 Touch Silver, Summer Villa.

7.35 HUNTERS' CHASE (SKY)
3m £3,435 (8 declared)

Betting: 15–8 Muskora, 3–1 Blue Cheek, 7–2 Certain Angle, 5–1 Cadrillon, 16–1 Emeo-H, Well Arranged, 25–1 Boxing Match, Step In Line.

8.05 NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE
2m 4f 110yds £3,111 (14 declared)

Betting: 4–1 Erins Bar, 5–1 Broadwater Boy, 7–1 Woodfield Vision, 8–1 Tweedswood, Highland Flame, 10–1 Lordsmere, Thomas Crown.

8.35 DAVID WOODHOUSE 30TH BIRTHDAY NOVICE HURDLE
2m 110yds £2,723 (16 declared)

Betting: 4–1 Classic Eagle, 9–2 Bajan, 5–1 Nikolas Nephew, 6–1 Tangshan, 7–1 Oneforthediteh, 8–1 Fort Knox, 10–1 Maill Franchise.

Perth (N.H.) tonight

	KEN OLIVER	TOP FORM
6.15	Goh Ah Cantona	Goh Ah Cantona
6.45	Gale Force	Stan's Your Man
7.15	Swing West	Swing West
7.45	Brier's Delight	Brier's Delight
8.15	Maple Bay	Yornanda
8.45	Arctic Fox	Latchford

Right handed circuit of 1¼m with 260yds run-in.
Going: Good to firm. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Long distance travellers: Damien's Choice (6.15), Sharp Command (6.45), Swing West (7.15) and Synieyourmissed (8.15) P Eccles, Lambourn, 412 miles.
Seven day winners: None.
Blinkered first time: 7.15 Big Target; 8.15 Inyougoblue. Visored: 6.15 Teacher.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing

6.15 HIGHLAND PARK SINGLE MALT MAIDEN HURDLE (SKY)
2m 4f 110yds £2,835 (17 declared)

Betting: 5–2 Damien's Choice, 7–2 Goh Ah Cantona, 5–1 The Middleman, 13–2 Baskcroft, 8–1 Woodfield Ride, 10–1 Victor Laszlo, 12–1 Mielolux.

6.45 BREAKTHROUGH BREAST CANCER NOV CHASE (SKY)
3m £3,566 (9 declared)

Betting: 7–2 Grange Court, 4–1 Gale Force, 9–2 Sharp Command, 5–1 Jacks Cross, 8–1 Stan's Your Man, 8–1 Mister Moddypaws, Young Steven.

7.15 MACALLAN SINGLE MALT NOVICE HURDLE (SKY)
2m 110yds £2,598 (9 declared)

Betting: 5–2 Swing West, 3–1 Count Tony, 7–2 Cinema Paradiso, 13–2 In The Genes, 10–1 Coscorobe, Smart Spirit, 16–1 Big Target.

7.45 FAMOUS GROUSE HCAP CH (SKY)
2m 4f 110yds £4,241 (10 dec)

Betting: 3–1 Brier's Delight, 5–1 Parlan, Cittadino, 8–1 Tighter Budget, 7–1 Wise Advice, Kings Season, 10–1 Tedjey'n'aitch.

8.15 KING CAR & JEEP RENTAL CONDITIONALS' SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 110yds £2,808 (15 declared)

Betting: 5–1 Synieyourmissed, 6–1 Inyougoblue, 7–1 Maple Bay, Master Hyde, 8–1 Trionalaw, Rimo Major, 10–1 Latin Leader, Mountain Dream.

8.45 BUNNAHABHAIN 12 Y.O. SINGLE MALT HANDICAP HURDLE
3m 110yds £2,819 (7 declared)

Betting: 8–4 Latchford, 7–2 Arctic Fox, 4–1 What Jim Wants, 5–1 Sweet Noble, 8–1 Jobran, 12–1 Blooming Spring, 14–1 Very Evident.

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Chepstow (N.H.)

	KEN OLIVER	TOP FORM
2.15	Siberian Henry	Khayal
2.45	Allow	Oriental Boy
3.20	Clinton	Clinton
3.50	Honeybed Wood	Honeybed Wood
4.20	Gran Turismo	Gran Turismo
4.50	Play Games	Play Games
5.20	Good Time Melody	—

Oval, left-handed undulating course, nearly 2m round with 250yds run-in.
Going: Good. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Long distance travellers: Staunch Friend (3.20) M Tompkins, Suffolk, 164 miles.
Seven day winners: None.
Blinkered first time: None. Visored: 2.15 Khayal.

2.15 STIRRUP CUP NOVICE HURDLE (Div I)
2m 4f 110yds £2,346 (12 declared)

Betting: 6–4 Siberian Henry, 3–1 Measured Step, 8–1 Absolutely Hopeful, Angelo's Double, Bad Bertrich, Glorious Romance, 12–1 Our Eddie, The Pickled Duke, Khayal.

2.45 NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE
3m £3,859 (13 declared)

Betting: 3–1 Allow, 4–1 Gower-Slave, 5–1 Denbera Hill, 6–1 Riot Leader, Churchtown Chance, 8–1 Oriental Boy.

3.20 EVERTONS WINE HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 4f 110yds £3,955 (10 declared)

Betting: 7–2 Clinton, 4–1 Runaway Pete, 7–1 Angelo's Double, Call My Guest, 8–1 Indelance, Blast Freeze, Khalidi.

3.50 SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE
2m 110yds £1,842 (18 declared)

Betting: 7–2 Honeybed Wood, 7–1 Backview, King Of The Blues, 8–1 Blade Of Fortune, Danter Blanc, Stapleford Lady, Longcroft.

4.20 STIRRUP CUP NOVICE HURDLE (Div 2)
2m 4f 110yds £2,346 (11 declared)

Betting: 11–8 Regal Absence, 4–1 Gran Turismo, 5–1 Freeline Fontaine, 6–1 L'Idefix, 8–1 Miner's Bill, 12–1 Conto, 25–1 Buck Board, Dunnicks Well, Nothing To It, Oaklands Wolf, Winning Town.

4.50 HUE AND CRY HANDICAP CHASE
2m 110yds £3,534 (9 declared)

Betting: 9–2 Ambleside, 5–1 Holly's Pride, 11–2 Robins Pride, Play Games, 6–1 Lucky Eddie, 7–1 Beyond Our Reach, Flaming Miracle.

5.20 END OF SEASON INTERMEDIATE OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT
2m 110yds £1,571 (16 declared)

Betting: 3–1 Good Time Melody, 7–2 Chief Red Nose, 4–1 Cardington House, 7–1 Master Rastus, 8–1 Gullible Guy, 12–1 Nicely Relaxed, Threads.

Lingfield

	CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
2.25	Mister Aspecto	Mister Aspecto
3.00	Feel Free	Sign And Wonders
3.30	Dodo	Half-Hitch
4.00	Hopeful Star	Mister Tricky
4.30	Dancino	Refuse To Lose
5.05	Glow Forum	Blueprint

Turf: Both today's races are run on the straight course.
All-weather: Left-handed course laid out inside turf track and only 1¼m round.
Going: Turf, good to firm. A.W. Standard. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Draw: High favoured in 3.30 and 4.00.
Long distance travellers: Mister Aspecto (2.25) M Johnston, Yorkshire, 270 miles.
Seven day winners: 5.05 Blueprint.
Blinkered first time: 5.05 Vrennen. Visored: None.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing

2.25 VIGO CLAIMING STAKES (A.W.)
2m £2,070 (7 declared)

Betting: 4–5 Mister Aspecto, 5–1 Aquavita, 8–1 Monaco Gold, 10–1 Carolls Marc, 12–1 Coastguards Hero, 14–1 Doncombe Hall, 16–1 Certain Surprise.

3.00 VERITY LEWIS BIRTHDAY LIMITED STAKES (A.W.)
1m 2f £2,847 (6 declared)

Betting: 9–4 Feel Free, 5–2 Signs And Wonders, 4–1 Tribal Peace, 6–1 Ki Chi Saga, 7–1 Kalli, 12–1 Double Rush.

3.30 SAN SEBASTIAN NOVICE STAKES 3YO
7f Turf £4,045 (7 declared)

Betting: 5–2 Stanzie, 3–1 Ring Dancer, Half-Hitch, 6–1 Mister Rambo, 13–2 Dodo, 20–1 Young-Un, Zeloh.

4.00 SANTANDER HANDICAP STAKES
6f Turf £2,070 (20 declared)

Betting: 6–1 Henry The Proud, 7–1 Gaily Mill, Mister Tricky, 8–1 Alpen Wolf.

4.30 LIMA HANDICAP (A.W.)
1m £5,962 (11 declared)

Betting: 5–1 Refuse To Lose, 6–1 Welcome Heights, 7–1 Mount Holly, Diamond Drill, Dancino, 8–1 Mr Nevermind, Barbason.

5.05 SANTIAGO HANDICAP (A.W.)
1m 4f £3,623 (9 declared)

Betting: 15–8 Blueprint, 4–1 Zorro, 5–1 Glow Forum, 6–1 Quiet Arch, 10–1 Hardi.

Folkestone (N.H.)

	KEN OLIVER	TOP FORM
5.55	Martha's Boy	Martha's Boy
6.25	Military Man	Military Man
6.55	Saffron Flame	Avostar
7.25	The Malakarma	The Malakarma
7.55	A Right Set Two	—
8.25	Around The Horn	Mill O'The Rags

Undulating, right-handed circuit of 1m3f; 220yds run-in on chase course, hurdles 250yds run-in.
Going: Good. ★ Denotes blinkers.
Long distance travellers: Avostar (6.55) and The Malakarma (7.25) Mrs C Bailey, Northants, 143 miles.
Seven day winners: 6.25 Rivers End; 7.25 The Malakarma.
Blinkered first time: 6.55 Saffron Flame; 7.55 Lord Knox; 8.25 Brimpton Bertie. Visored: None.
● All races are for amateur riders.

5.55 VERRALL'S HONDA WORLD NOVICES' HUNTERS' CHASE
3m 2f £1,795 (5 declared)

Betting: 4–6 Martha's Boy, 5–2 Brambledown, 7–1 Ballyalla Castle, 14–1 Renilan, 25–1 Tomcappagh.

6.25 GRANT'S CHERRY BRANDY SE NOVICE HUNTERS' CHASE
2m 5f £1,737 (7 declared)

Betting: 9–4 Military Man, 11–4 Rivers End, 7–2 Lo-Flying Missile, 4–1 Glainock Lad, 14–1 In Place, 16–1 Eli Gee.

6.55 IBS APPEAL OPEN HUNTERS' CHASE
3m 2f £1,861 (4 declared)

Betting: 5–4 Avostar, 9–4 Saffron Flame, 3–1 Stornhill Pilgrim, 10–1 Sure Pride.

7.25 HUNTERS' CHASE
3m 7f £2,654 (7 declared)

Betting: 2–1 The Malakarma, 7–2 Young Brave, 11–2 Glenbrickan, 7–1 Glen Oak, High Padre, 8–1 Idiams, 10–1 Seven Incidents.

7.55 KENT & SURREY BLOODHOUNDS MAIDEN HUNTERS CHASE
2m 5f £1,394 (11 declared)

Betting: 9–4 A Right Set Two, 11–4 Sparkling Blake, 5–1 Bodwick Babble, 7–1 Roscolvin, 8–1 Lord Knox, 12–1 Deel's Pipe, 20–1 Piaccolo, Malli Line.

8.25 PETT FARM UNITED HUNTS OPEN HUNTERS' CHASE
2m 5f £1,914 (11 declared)

Betting: 3–1 Around The Horn, 4–1 Starvid, 5–1 Nadjati, 6–1 Dreamstick, Mill O'the Rags, 8–1 Lucas Court.

Trio: £84.50. CSF: £13.60. Tricast: £177.87. Nicholls) Tote: £6.90; £1.20, £3.40, £2.10. Dual F: £19.90. Trio: £55.40. CSF: £90.68. Bradford (Pk Ave): Yorkshire v Nottinghamshire. front and a Jamie Smith penalty briefly tied it up at 3–3.

The Guardian INTERACTIVE

Football

Anderton is back as Cole and Le Tissier are frozen out

David Lacey

GLENN HODDLE is now putting faith to the ultimate test. The England coach believes Darren Anderton can make the World Cup squad he will announce in three weeks, which is not so much a matter of making the lame walk as trusting that groin strains will not intervene once the running starts in earnest.

Hoddle watched Anderton and Matthew Le Tissier perform on opposite sides when Tottenham met Southampton at White Hart Lane on Sunday, and it was the Spurs man's greater influence over the whole game which kept him in with a chance for France. For Le Tissier, along with Stuart Pearce, Andy Cole, Ray Parlour, Dominic Matteo and Kevin Pressman, that chance has now gone.

Anderton is among the 30 players from whom Hoddle will choose his final 22. The squad he announced yesterday will form the basis for England's last three warm-up matches, starting with Saudi Arabia's visit to Wembley on Saturday week, followed by games against Morocco and Belgium in Casablanca in the Hassan II International Cup.

The Moroccan tournament will add a practical side to England's final preparations in La Manga, from where they will fly in and out of Casablanca for each match. Not until the last minute will the unlucky ones learn they have missed the cut, although some must already suspect they will be watching the World Cup on television.

At 36, Pearce could hardly have cherished realistic ambitions of playing in another World Cup but Cole will be bitterly disappointed, having scored 25 goals in his best season since leaving Newcastle for Manchester United.

The absence of Pearce leaves only Paul Gascoigne to remind England of what they achieved under Bobby Robson in 1990. Gascoigne's lack of match practice and the injuries he has suffered since leaving Rangers for Middlesbrough have raised doubts about how effective he can be this time. But what are the options?

The fact that Hoddle is also prepared to give both Anderton and Jamie Redknapp opportunities to make the squad is a measure of how thin his resources are in the creative areas. Redknapp's hopes seemed to have disappeared when he was injured in a tackle with Dion Dublin three weeks ago but clearly Hoddle has not given up on him.

The presence of a fully-fit, in-form Anderton in France would give England considerable encouragement. It would also mean Hoddle being less dependent on David Beckham on the right flank.

Anderton's last significant England act was to hit a post at Wembley. Had his shot gone in, as the Golden Goal it would have taken Terry Venables's side to the Euro 96 final.

Subsequently Anderton's career has marked time through injuries. He only recently returned for Tottenham but impressed Hoddle in the England B match against Russia. Le Tissier scored a hat-trick against the Russians but Hoddle is not short of strikers and, as he explained yesterday, Anderton is a better all-round prospect.

"Darren is a very talented player," said Hoddle, "and he has proved that over the last few games. Whether he can get in the 22 is another story, but he is going to get better and better, and we have some football up our sleeves to see how he goes. His fitness on Sunday was as good as anybody on the pitch. He just needs to get used to a match tempo.

"Matthew can only really play in one position. He was very close to the squad but at the end of the day he has not done enough to force his way in. He did some wonderful things on Sunday but I think he has to improve over the 90 minutes. That's where Darren has something over him."

A similar argument has kept Dublin in the squad ahead of Cole. The Coventry's striker's ability to double effectively as a centre-back if need be gives Hoddle an important option.

Most of England's World Cup places are spoken for. Of the outfield players in the present squad, Rio Ferdinand, Nicky Butt, Robert Lee and Paul Merson look nearest the fringe, and it may yet be touch and go between Ian Wright and Les Ferdinand for the last place among the strikers.

England squad

Name	Club	Age	1-11	Sub	Caps	Goals
David Seaman	Arsenal	34	26	3	39	—
Nigel Martyn	Leeds	31	5	1	6	—
Ian Walker	Tottenham	28	1	2	3	—
Tim Flowers	Blackburn	31	10	—	10	—
Gary Neville	Man Utd	23	23	2	25	—
Philip Neville	Man Utd	21	8	2	10	—
Graeme Le Saux	Chelsea	29	21	2	23	1
Andy Hinchcliffe	Sheff Wed	28	5	—	5	—
Rio Ferdinand	West Ham	19	1	1	2	—
Tony Adams	Arsenal	31	50	—	50	4
Gareth Southgate	Aston Villa	27	20	3	23	—
Sol Campbell	Tottenham	23	11	3	14	—
Martin Keown	Arsenal	31	15	1	16	1
Paul Ince	Liverpool	30	35	2	39	2
Paul Gascoigne	Middlesbrough	30	44	10	54	10
David Beckham	Man Utd	23	12	1	13	—
David Batty	Newcastle	29	23	7	30	—
Nicky Butt	Man Utd	23	1	4	5	—
Robert Lee	Newcastle	32	11	5	16	2
Jamie Redknapp	Liverpool	24	5	3	8	—
Paul Scholes	Man Utd	23	5	1	6	3
Paul Merson	Middlesbrough	30	7	10	17	2
Darren Anderton	Tottenham	26	16	—	16	5
Teddy Sheringham	Man Utd	32	25	7	32	9
Alan Shearer	Newcastle	27	36	2	38	18
Steve McManaman	Liverpool	26	16	4	20	—
Les Ferdinand	Tottenham	31	12	2	14	5
Michael Owen	Liverpool	18	2	1	3	—
Ian Wright	Arsenal	34	15	14	29	9
Dion Dublin	Coventry	29	1	—	1	—



Cole . . . 25 goals and out

Gascoigne is cleared to puff away

WHAT was good enough for Johan Cruyff and Bobby Charlton is good enough for Paul Gascoigne, was the message from Glenn Hoddle yesterday.

Gascoigne picked up a smoking habit while he was playing for Lazio and he has returned to cigarettes in recent weeks as he helped his new club Middlesbrough return to the Premiership.

The England coach, though, has continued his softly-softly approach in his dealings with the wayward midfielder who is battling to be fit for the World Cup.

Hoddle pointed to the likes of Ossie Ardiles and Gianluca Vialli, making it clear he would not interfere with Gascoigne's personal habits.

"I want Paul to be 100 per cent physically and mentally, and I've always said he's got to meet me halfway on that," he said. "In his last four performances for us he's been terrific. Since then he's had some little niggles but even though he's been playing with an ankle injury he's finished the season.

"Now he's had a week to get it treated and calm down a bit. We've got a bit of time and hopefully we'll get him fit for the World Cup.

"Paul's been smoking since he was in Rome with Lazio, six or seven years ago. If I tried to stop him for three weeks now it might have an adverse effect."

But the anti-smoking group ASH was critical of Hoddle's stance. Its director Clive Bates said: "This is a real heart-sinker. Millions of kids will be watching the World Cup and get the wrong signals. Gascoigne would find a rapid improvement in the function of his lungs if he gave up. We would then get a turbo-charged Gazza."

SMOKERS WORLD XI: Falk (Brazil); Mercer, J Charlton (both England); Socrates, Garrincha (both Brazil); Greaves (England); Vialli (Italy); Gioscia (France); Ardiles (Argentina); Macdonald, R Charlton (both England); Cancia Menotti (Argentina).

European Cup Winners' Cup: Chelsea v VfB Stuttgart

Vialli vision of future is hue of blue

Martin Thorpe on why the Italian's view is progressive, not aggressive

WHEN Gianluca Vialli recently said that tonight's final was Chelsea's most important game ever, a few members of the 1955 championship-winning side may have been tempted to send the Italian a copy of the club's official history.

And as the Cup Winners' Cup was being used as a yardstick of greatness, a few of the Chelsea side who lifted that trophy in 1971 might have been tempted to send Vialli some less well-chosen words about his assumption that their accomplishment was worth less than the one his team hope to achieve in Stockholm.

This is, however, not a case of Vialli fluffing his Stamford Bridge history test. In making his pronouncement the player-manager is looking forward, not back. He believes that a victory over VfB Stuttgart in the Rasunda Stadium is the next crucial step along Chelsea's evolutionary path.

As with early man, fate could make a monkey of Vialli's theory, but he firmly believes that if the club get the right result tonight, they could soon be ruling all they survey.

"This game is the first step to Chelsea being one of the elite clubs in Europe," he said yesterday. "That is my dream, and this game is the next test. Then my next challenge is to win the Premiership and the Champions League; a win here will give the players the confidence to beat anyone."

The progression so far has been impressive. In 1995 Chelsea lost to Real Zaragoza in the semi-final of this competition. Dennis Wise, the club captain, played in that side. "It just wasn't good enough then," he says. "The lack of quality showed. This current side's a lot better, simple as that. The players are more quality, and that's the difference."

Chelsea's Gustavo Poyet then played for Zaragoza and he is also impressed by the change. "Chelsea are better than before," he says. "Then, they played like a normal English team with long balls and a big centre-forward. Not any more."

Mark Hughes, who, along with Poyet, Gianfranco Zola and Vialli, has invaluable experience of playing in the final of this competition, having scored twice for Manchester United in 1991. He believes the current Chelsea line-up are better even than that United side, which went on to take such a grip on the Premiership.

"We are probably further on in our development than United were then," he says. "Individually, this side is better."

With money available for Vialli to add more quality to his squad this summer, perhaps Chelsea can be a force in Europe. First, though, they must prove themselves as a force tonight.

To that end, they received the encouraging news yesterday that Zola has recovered from his groin strain and is fit to play. He will be hoping to impress the Italian coach Cesare Maldini ahead of his World Cup squad announcement.

But the injured Frank Sinclair is a non-starter while Graeme Le Saux, whose crosses from the left are an important part of Chelsea's armoury, is struggling to recover from a bruised calf.

Going forward, of course, is what Chelsea do best, and, as that is also Stuttgart's forte, viewers could be in for a refreshingly open game without the caution and nerves which often throw a wet blanket over major finals.

It would be a huge surprise if Chelsea did not start with Zola and Vialli up front, with Tore Andre Flo and Hughes, possibly playing his final Chelsea game, on the bench in case the London team require a late winner to prevent a European club final going to a golden goal for the first time.

The midfield should comprise Dan Petrescu, Wise, Roberto Di Matteo and Poyet, with a defence of Steve Clarke, Frank Leboeuf, Michael Duberry and perhaps Le Saux lining up in front of the dependable Ed de Goey.

On this team rests Vialli's hopes for the night and the future. "We've had an excellent season and now it is up to us to make it extraordinary," he added.

"I'm hoping that this match is going to be not a party but a celebration of a very important moment for Chelsea FC."



He ain't heavy . . . Frank Leboeuf gives Roberto Di Matteo an easier ride than Chelsea expect tonight IAN WALDIE

Löw high despite friction

Ian Traynor on ructions at Stuttgart before they play Chelsea in Stockholm tonight

JOACHIM LOW could be forgiven for thinking he is doing something right. In two seasons as coach of VfB Stuttgart he has put silverware in the trophy room and ensured a couple of years' lucrative European competition, and tonight in Stockholm he sends out his team to face Gianluca Vialli's Chelsea in the Cup Winners' Cup final.

"Stockholm is the absolute high point of my career," says the 38-year-old coach. "Last season's German Cup final was my greatest success but this is different."

Different indeed. Because, win or lose, Löw's days at the Gottlieb-Daimler Stadium in the southern German city look numbered. All the signs are that after months of sparring with Stuttgart's powerful president Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder, Löw will be shown the door.

Löw, named the Bundesliga Manager of the Month by the magazine Kicker, shows no bitterness, but some of his squad are rallying to his cause. Fredi Bobic, Stuttgart's Germany striker, followed up his sending-off in Saturday's final league game of the season, a 1-0 defeat of Werder Bremen, with a declaration of support for the coach and criticism of the president.

While Löw has been gearing up for tonight, Mayer-Vorfelder has been strangely busy belittling the tournament.

Saturday's victory saw Stuttgart, like Chelsea, finish fourth in their league and earn a place in next season's Uefa Cup. Mayer-Vorfelder made it plain he preferred to play in the Uefa Cup than the Cup Winners' Cup because it has an extra round and is more lucrative. Should Stuttgart win tonight, the president said the club would go into next season's Cup Winners' Cup only if they were compensated from the Bundesliga's television earnings.

Not quite the morale-booster the team need. Löw and his squad, however, appear unchastened. "The morale and the motivation could not be better," says Krasimir Balakov, the Bulgarian international and Stuttgart's playmaker. "This is the biggest game of my life."

It is also Stuttgart's biggest game since they went down to Diego Maradona's Napoli in the 1989 Uefa final.

Balakov's form may be crucial. On song, the 32-year-old is one of the finest sights in the Bundesliga. But an incident on the flight to Stockholm, when he allegedly slapped a Stuttgarter Zeitung journalist, brought him a management reprimand and unwelcome headlines.

Löw admits that Balakov, Stuttgart's highest earner, has been playing "well below his potential this season".

Martin Haar, an agency reporter with Stuttgarter Nachrichten, says: "That's an understatement. Balakov has been totally off form all year. But he makes them tick and could produce the goods on the night."

Despite hamstring problems Bobic, who has scored six goals in the competition and is still hoping against hope to squeeze into Berti Vogts's World Cup squad, is almost certain to play. The Nigerian international Jonathan Apkoborie is the other striker and he, like Balakov, has had a wayward season.

Stuttgart are further hindered by the absence of their experienced captain and libero Frank Verlaat, who won a European Cup winners' medal with Ajax in 1987, and the defender Martin Spanring. Both are suspended. In their absence Stuttgart will be relying on the experience of Thomas Berthold, capped 62 times by Germany, and the Croatian international midfielder Zvonimir Soldo.

"There's no doubt that Chelsea are the stronger side and are also on better form," says Haar. "If it had been a two-leg final I wouldn't have fancied VfB's chances."

Stuttgart's fans have been reluctant to make the trip. "It could be like a home game for Chelsea, with 30,000 English fans and 4,000 Germans," says Löw. "But you always have a chance in a final. Chelsea are a very strong side, strong on the attack and in midfield. They're attractive and have passion. But they also have weaknesses."

Chelsea can expect the unexpected

David Lacey says history may be on Vialli's side in Stockholm tonight

CUP football could have been invented for Chelsea, a club who have spent most of their 94 years occasionally rising to occasions. Chelsea may no longer be the Pensioners but they are still the Old Unpredictables, capable in a moment of reducing their supporters from a state of ecstasy to one of utter despair.

Or the reverse. Chelsea are about to meet VfB Stuttgart in the Rasunda Stadium tonight in their second Cup Winners' Cup final because in this season's competition they have refused to bow to events. The sight of Gianluca Vialli ploughing through the snow in Tromso last October to score twice in the last five minutes, restricting the Norwegians to a 3-2 victory overwhelmingly overturned 7-1 at Stamford Bridge, is etched in the memory.

Little did Vialli, or anyone else, suspect then that he would be taking Chelsea to the final as player-manager. The fall-out from Ruud Gullit's sudden departure in February was mutually acrimonious but so far, at least in the cup competitions, the change has been justified by the results.

Vialli combines a knowledge of football with both charm, which Gullit possessed in spades, and humility, which had never been the Dutchman's strong suit. From the start the Italian was his own man, immediately making the tactical switch from playing three at the back with a five-man midfield to 4-4-2 and the pressing game favoured by, among others, Juventus.

His reward was instant, a 3-1 victory over Arsenal in the return leg of the Coca-Cola Cup semi-finals which overturned a doleful 2-1 defeat at Highbury. Chelsea's 2-0 victory over Middlesbrough in the final was hardly the stroll past Bryan Robson's side which had brought the FA Cup to Stamford Bridge 10 months earlier but it has left them with the insurance of a place in next season's Uefa Cup, whatever happens tonight.

In the Premiership not a lot happened after Boxing Day when Chelsea lay third, seven points behind the leaders Manchester United and six ahead of Arsenal, the eventual champions. Subsequently they won another eight matches but lost 10 and although they can finish fourth the prospect of Chelsea playing in the Champions League is still remote.

It was ever thus. Some outstanding match-winners have played for Chelsea — Hughie Gallacher, Tommy Lawton, Jimmy Greaves, Peter Osgood, Mark Hughes — but so far the championship has been won only once, Ted Drake's side taking the title in 1955 and then being refused permission by the Football League to enter the new European Cup.

Two seasons later that team was broken up to make way for fresh blood. Success in football is ephemeral at the best of times but with Chelsea it is apt to be more fleeting than usual.

Four years after winning the Cup Winners' Cup in 1971 they were relegated. Those who had watched enthralled while Real Madrid were defeated in a replayed final in Athens now found themselves pondering the chances of a point at Oxford United.

The recent influx of foreign talents has made little difference to the pattern. Gianfranco Zola was outstanding for the last six months of last season and his arrival in November 1996 revived a team who were beginning to drift. But this season the Italian imp's form has been fitful.

Hughes, though, remains a talismanic redeemer of unpromising situations, witness his decisive goal against Vicenza in the Cup Winners' Cup semi-finals. The Welshman is expected to be on the bench tonight but another batch of foreign signings would not compensate for losing him, should he want to leave.

Hughes remains a talismanic redeemer of unpromising situations

Like Chelsea, Stuttgart's poor away record has eroded their hopes of making a more serious challenge for their championship. Yet Stuttgart did win the Bundesliga as recently as 1992, and they met Leeds United, the English champions, in the first round of the following season's European Cup.

That tie ended in a largely empty Nou Camp stadium in Barcelona after Stuttgart, having defeated Howard Wilkinson's team on away goals, were found to have used one too many foreign players in the second leg at Elland Road. Uefa ordered a replay on a neutral ground, which Leeds won with a memorable solo goal from Carl Shutt.

Given Chelsea's propensity for producing unlikely heroes in cup finals — David Webb in 1970, John Dempsey in 1971, Eddie Newton in 1997 and Frank Sinclair this season — Stuttgart may again fall victim to a stranger in the night. Certainly Chelsea's capacity for coming good at the least expected moment should never be underestimated.

For as Ralph L Finn began his history of the club 29 years ago: "Chelsea are the most unusual of clubs. They have never done what every other club was doing at the same time as every other club was doing it."

Dennis Wise, one feels, could not have put it better.

● A History of Chelsea FC by Ralph L Finn (Pelham Books, 30s or £1.50).

Amsterdam may lose European final as flights become a fancy

THE European Cup final, scheduled to be played in Amsterdam next Wednesday, is under threat of being taken away from the Dutch city because of "inadequate transport arrangements". Players and fans of Real Madrid and Juventus, the competing clubs, have been given no assurance that they will be able to land or take off at the city's Schipol airport.

Uefa, the European football governing body, has denied a request from the clubs to play the final over two legs in Madrid and Turin. The general secretary Gerhard Aigner has sent a letter to the Dutch Football Association expressing his grave concern at the travel situation.

The Dutch FA says that about 160 charter flights had been arranged to bring some 30,000 Italian and Spanish fans to Amsterdam but legal limits on noise at Schipol airport will not allow the extra traffic.

A Uefa statement yesterday said: "Even the flights due to transport the players of the two clubs have not had permission to land at the airport."

Team talk
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Arsenal	60	Hudd. Town	74	Sheffield United	88
Aston Villa	61	Ipswich Town	75	Sheffield Wed.	89
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Blackburn	64	Liverpool	78	Stoke City	92
Bolton	65	Man. City	79	Sunderland	93
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Football

Stoke give Little new role

Ian Malin

BRIAN LITTLE will be named as the manager of Stoke City today. He returns to the game less than three months after he surprisingly resigned as manager of Aston Villa.

Little is expected to be given similar powers to those enjoyed by Graham Taylor at Watford, who manages club as well as team affairs.

Watford are taking Stoke's First Division place after the Potteries club were relegated 10 days ago when they lost their final game of the campaign at home to Manchester City.

Little was on holiday in Majorca when he received a call inviting him to take over at the Britannia Stadium, where Alan Durban has stood aside as caretaker manager.

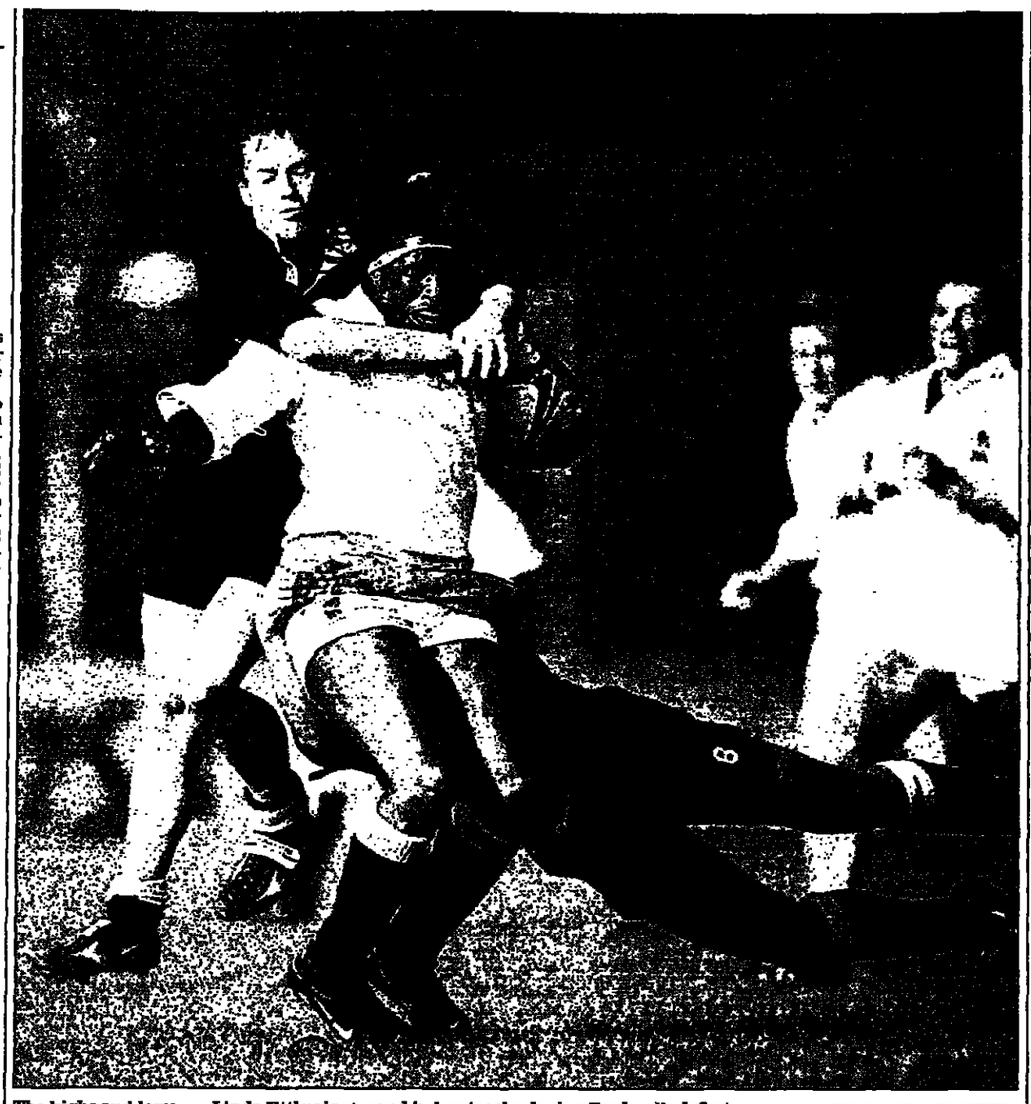
The job will give the 44-year-old Little one of the hardest tests of his managerial career, but rescuing ailing clubs is a familiar role. During his managerial apprenticeship he took Darlington from the GM Vauxhall Conference back into the Third Division, and he was also in charge when Leicester City gained promotion to the Premiership.

Oldham and Millwall, who will provide Second Division opposition for Stoke next season, both have new managers.

Oldham have appointed their former striker Andy Ritchie. The 37-year-old, who also played for Manchester United and Leeds, scored 82 goals in 217 league appearances for Oldham before joining Scarborough in 1995. He takes over from Neil Warnock, who left last week.

Millwall have also turned to a former player, Keith Stevens, who at 33 becomes one of the domestic game's youngest managers; he joined the club as a trainee 17 years ago and succeeds Billy Bonds. Millwall's former captain Alan McLeary will be his assistant.

Chris Waddle last night parted company with Second Division Burnley by "mutual consent." Waddle took charge at Turf Moor last July following Adrian Heath's departure to Everton. But Burnley only escaped relegation with a 2–1 win against Fulham in their final game.



The highs and lows . . . Linda Uttley is stopped in her tracks during England's defeat PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE EGERTON

Other All Blacks end defence

John Wales in Amsterdam

ENGLAND's hopes of retaining the women's rugby World Cup foundered against the mighty All Blacks, the valiant holders giving up their crown as the favourites recorded a 44–11 victory.

England had the audacity to take an early lead with two penalties but New Zealand responded with a penalty and a converted try from the centre Annaleah Rush to hold a 10–6 half-time advantage.

The second half was emphatic, however, with New Zealand's powerful, pacy play overwhelming England in the 90F beat. Rush cemented her dominance by scoring another try, three conversions and a penalty for a personal tally of 24 points.

In between Rush's scores the stand-off Anna Richards and wing Vanessa Cootes touched down, the latter's double contributing to a remarkable international record of 30 tries in only eight games.

Bruised and battered, England countered with a consolation try from the lock Clair Green — the first of the tournament against New Zealand — but the All Blacks had the final say when the replacement Kellie Kiwi went over.

In Saturday's final New Zealand face the United States, who defeated Canada 46–6. The Americans, runners-up in 1994, beat the All Blacks in the 1991 final but few predict a repeat.

The England captain Emma Mitchell said: "We did about the best we could against them for 30 minutes, when we had them rattled, but they are a great side and justify their status as the best in the world. Our goal has to be to come back stronger and aim to beat them next time."

Scotland recovered from the disappointment of missing the final of the cup competition by beating France 27–7 to secure a place in the consolation plate final against Australia.

Hall outlines a collision course

Michael Walker

SIR John Hall indicated yesterday that he may remain as chairman of Newcastle United beyond the end of this month.

Hall had been due to step down on May 31 in a deal brokered with Newcastle's plc after the previous chairman Freddie Shepherd was forced to resign. But Hall said yesterday: "I would prefer not to be in charge [at the start of next season] but it could be necessary to bring a further period of stability.

"And don't forget, I'm still trustee of the majority of shares and I want to look after the business."

Hall had to return to Newcastle in the wake of the scandal surrounding his son Douglas and Shepherd but the plc board favours assuming full control of the football club and Hall's statement yesterday could result in conflict with the plc chairman Sir Terence Harrison.

"There is still a lot to be done," Hall said. "But I think there is a need for a football board as well as a plc board. The football board can relate to the fans more."

Savo Milosevic was last night completing a £3.5 million move from Aston Villa to the Spanish club Real Zaragoza. The unsettled Serb cost Villa that sum from Partizan Belgrade three years ago.

The departing Celtic coach Wim Jansen said yesterday that his former assistant Murdo MacLeod is the natural replacement to succeed him at Parkhead.

The Bolton manager Colin Todd has cleared the decks by releasing four senior players. The defender Chris Fairclough and the midfielder John Sheridan, who both had injury-hit seasons, leave the relegated club under the Bosman ruling and the deadline-day loan signings John Salako and the Swiss-born striker Gaetano Giallanza have not been retained.

ENGLAND U-21 SQUAD (Toulon tournament, May 14-23): Simonsen (Tranmere), Lucas (Preston); Clegg, Curtis (both Man Utd), Rogers (Notts Forest), Howe (Bournemouth), Parse (Birmingham), Marsh (Oxford), Kozluk, Elliott (both Derby), Carragher (Liverpool), Lampard (West Ham), Oakley (Southampton), Clemence (Tottenham), Hackney (Leicester), Bent (Wimbledon), Allen (Tottenham), Best (Crystal Palace).

Nationwide play-offs

Appetite of Burley's boys sustained by diet of dreams

Trevor Haylett

IPSWICH Town are talking up their play-off prospects but it is hard to resist the feeling that last week's salute to their 1978 FA Cup winners was the nearest they will come to Wembley this season.

Hundreds of supporters lined the streets of the Suffolk town, as they had 20 years ago, to acclaim Bobby Robson and the players who struck a blow for every small club with their defeat of Arsenal.

The current Ipswich manager George Burley was there with other defensive stalwarts such as Mick Mills and Kevin Beattie. Only the grey in the Burley barnet aged the Scot who, as a 21-year-old right-back, gave a remarkably assured performance on that day at Wembley.

Now, however, after Charlton's victory at Portman Road in the play-offs first leg, those famously boyish Burley features betray his concern as he contemplates another disappointing end to a season which promised so much.

Tonight, not only must he revive a team who lacked creative drive and were ill-disciplined in the first leg. He also has to find a way past a Charlton defence unbroken for eight consecutive games.

At this stage a year ago Ipswich's confidence was high after a 1–1 draw at Sheffield United. But they lost the semi-final to an away goal, and tonight Burley will use that change in fortunes to inspire his men for the return leg at the Valley.

"There is still all to play for," he said. "We had an excellent result last year at Bramall Lane and yet went out, so we'll see what happens now."

Only two teams have won at Charlton this season and one was Ipswich, who won by the only goal in a Coca-Cola Cup tie last August. Since then both sides have improved significantly, Ipswich buying themselves a match-winner in David Johnson, who will be eager to make amends after wasting three chances to equalise on Sunday.

Charlton are without Danny Mills, who was sent off at Portman Road. Afterwards Ipswich's captain Matt Holland accused Charlton of trying to kick his players, and reports alleged that Neil Heaney had punched the Ipswich defender Mauricio Taricco outside the players' lounge. The team who retain their discipline tonight will earn their place at Wembley.

● Steve Thompson goes to Sunderland today knowing that his job as Sheffield United manager is on the line. Defeat for United at the Stadium of Light and elimination from the play-offs may spell the end of Thompson's three-month reign with the Blades. Victory, however, would give the club their second play-off final in two years.

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Snooker

Fury over leak as O'Sullivan sweats on test

Clive Everton

RONNIE O'SULLIVAN faces a fine of £61,000 if today's analysis of his drug-test B sample confirms the initial positive for cannabis, at least if World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association precedent is any guide.

Even though the 22-year-old world No.3 from Essex is hardly a stranger to the tabloids — he drew a two-year suspended ban for an assault on a WPBSA press officer at the 1996 World Championship — there was fury in some sections of the sport yesterday about the blatant leaking of a matter that is supposed to be confidential until all procedures are completed.

This is not the first time that leaks have put the sport on the back pages. In January O'Sullivan's manager Ian Doyle, a trenchant critic of the governing body, was furious when the News of the World published a copy of the WPBSA letter telling his client Stephen Hendry of impending disciplinary action over the Scot's remark that "the game is poison from top to bottom". The action was eventually dropped.

Hendry and O'Sullivan are among the eight players who have forced next month's egm of the association in Preston where members will vote on a resolution to remove Rex Williams, the chairman, and his entire board.

The last time the governing body was faced with a cannabis positive, the world No. 24 Paul Hunter was docked the £4,550 in prize-money and the ranking points he had earned at the event where he was tested, last October's Grand Prix in Bournemouth.

If this precedent were to be followed, confirmation of the result today would cost O'Sullivan the £61,000 he collected for winning the Irish Masters, where the sample was taken in March.

Cricket

Television drama leaves cricket at the crossroads

Greg Baum

THE England and Wales Cricket Board opened its books for the first time at Edgbaston yesterday, but kept one of its most sensitive matters in a sealed section and warned that, unless it was freed to put a higher price on televised Test cricket, the next issue might consist entirely of blank pages.

Lord MacLaurin, the ECB chairman, said cricket was at a "crossroads". The board needed about £300 million to continue advancing the game; its annual income was about £75 million, the same as Manchester United's. Forty per cent came from its BBC television rights deal, which expires after this season.

If the Secretary of State Chris Smith did not delist Test cricket and so allow the ECB at least to establish a market price for it, cricket would struggle to consolidate recent gains such as the increase in schoolchildren playing the game.

The ECB chief executive Tim Lamb admitted that the pinch was on. Britannic Assurance, Texaco and AXA were all in their last year as sponsors, and only four of a projected eight key sponsors for next year's World Cup had been signed. Cricket, Lamb said, had received proportionately more National Lottery money — about £50 million — than any other sport but was not guaranteed to keep it.

Lamb reiterated that if Test cricket was delisted it would not necessarily be lost to terrestrial television, nor even sold to the highest bidder. "It's about a balance," he said.

Another burning issue, that of the future of the County Championship, was reduced to a fine point at yesterday's release. McLaurin said that the one-division format was "set in stone" for the next three years, and change could not be considered until the television issue was resolved.

Tennis

Sampras sweats but survives kiln

Stephen Bierley in Rome

METEOROLOGISTS are forecasting that this will be the hottest summer in Europe for more than 100 years, which may be bad news as far as the French Open aspirations of Pete Sampras are concerned.

The world No.1 is always suspect when the temperature rises, and yesterday the centre court here was searingly hot. No cat would have ventured across it, and Sampras began his Italian Open first-round match against Sweden's Thomas Enqvist with a wary step.

The crowd, aware of Sampras's feeble first-round defeat here against his fellow American Jim Courier last year, and his recent 6–1, 6–1 capitulation in Monte Carlo to France's Fabrice Santoro, turned off their mobile phones to roundly whistle the No.1 seed as he fell behind 3–0 in the first set.

"I didn't feel very comfortable at the start but as the match went on I began to settle in," said Sampras, who won 7–6, 6–4. "The balls were flying and the court was playing more like a hard court."

Sampras won the title here in 1994 but in his two appearances since then he has headed for the hills after the first round. On Monday he escorted six children on a sightseeing tour around the Foro Italico. It is a wonder he remembered where things were.

Enqvist had lost seven of his past eight encounters with Sampras, but they had never met on clay. The feeling was that Sampras might struggle, particularly as the Swede has been in excellent form, winning titles in Marseille and Munich. Enqvist served well, but Sampras served better. And once his trusty weapon was in the groove the rest of his game followed suit.

For Ivan Lendl, the winning of Wimbledon became an obsession; it was the one Grand Slam title to elude the Czech-born American. Similarly the French Open has escaped Sampras. "I would love to do it but it will not become an obsession," he said. "Over the next four or five years I will be giving it my best shot but I am not going to change my yearly schedule just for the sake of it."

The nearest Sampras has come to the title at Roland Garros was two years ago when he reached the last four before running out of gas against the eventual champion, Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia, who yesterday defeated the Swede Thomas Johansson 7–6, 6–2. That was another extremely hot year and Sampras's suspect stamina, tested to its limit on clay, was found wanting.

Sampras now plays another Swede, Magnus Norman, who knocked him out of the French Open last year.

Pat Rafter, the US Open champion, arrived here after a month off and gave the impression of having left his tennis brain on the beach, losing 6–3, 6–7, 6–4 to Holland's Sjeng Schalken, a late replacement for the Swiss Marc Rosset, who had a bad back.

"I tried to persuade Marc to play just one point," joked Rafter, who last year reached the semi-final in Paris by serve-volleying on clay.

Kournikova shows the way as women sign up for a new deal

Richard Jago in Berlin

ANNA KOURNIKOVA had hundreds following her every move in a doubles match on an outside court here at the German Open yesterday, a fitting touch on the day that the producer of the film Pretty Woman, Arnon Milchan, has signed a multi-million-dollar TV rights deal with the Women's Tennis Association.

The stunning 16-year-old has, along with several other eye-catching young players such as the Williams sisters and Martina Hingis, helped to open up for the WTA its most lucrative deal to date. Milchan's company has agreed "a substantial increase" on the $5 million (£3.1 million) the association earned from TV rights last year.

This has become possible largely because in the last three Grand Slam tournaments the viewing figures for women's matches were some 20 per cent up on men's matches.

Kournikova today plays one of her other doubles partners, her fellow Russian Elena Likhovtseva, for a place in the third round. The world No. 2 Lindsay Davenport is already there after a hard-earned 6–8, 4–6, 6–1 win over the 19-year-old Slovakian Henrieta Nagyova.

Davenport welcomed the TV deal. "It's a great time to be one of the new stars coming up," said the 22-year-old American. "But no, I'm not one of them. I'm too old."

Results

Football

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First Division: Tottenham 5 Southampton 0; Arsenal 1 West Ham 0.

Rugby Union

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP: Semi-finals: Canada 6 US 49; England 11 New Zealand 44. Plate: Semi-finals: Scotland 27 France 7; Australia 17 Spain 15. Bowls: Semi-finals: Ireland 20 Italy 5; Wales 13 Kazakhstan 18. Shield: Semi-finals: Holland 81 Russia 0; Germany 20 Sweden 18.

Golf

MASTERCARD TOURNAMENT (Newcastle): First-round leaders: 67 R Hurd, 68 R Wragg; R Dinsdale, 69 N Roderick; J Knight, 70 S Hurd; J Eddolls; P Fenton; E Little; J Hepworth; N Walton.

GOLF FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP (Sunningdale): Final scores: 446 South Africa. 447 Australia, 449 England, 450 New Zealand, 455 France, 469 Sweden, 474 Germany; Ireland, 475 Scotland; Wales, 528 Holland, 537 Hong Kong. Individual: 138 J Elson (Eng) 69, 69. 141 A Firmani (Aus) 75, 66. 146 W Botha (SA) 73, 73. 147 D Howe (Eng) 71, 76; B Heaven (NZ) 77, 70.

Tennis

ATP ITALIAN OPEN (Rome): First round: S Schalken (Neth) bt P Rafter (Aus) 6–3, 6–7, 6–4; Y Kafelnikov (Rus) bt T Johansson (Swe) 7–6, 6–2; A Costa (Sp) bt H Gumy (Arg) 6–3, 6–1; F Vicente (Sp) bt M-K Goellner (Ger) 2–6, 6–3, 6–1; B Steven (NZ) bt G Raoux (Fr) 7–5, 6–2; P Sampras (US) bt T Enqvist (Swe) 7–6, 6–4; A Clement (Fr) bt J Siemerink (Neth) 6–1, 6–4; A Berasategui (Sp) bt G Galimberti (It) 6–4, 6–2; J Balcared (Fr) bt J Tarango (US) 6–4, 6–2; F Mantilla (Sp) bt J Courier (US) 6–2, 6–3; V Enqvist-Jr (It) bt K Kucera (Slovak) 6–4, 6–3; C Pistina (Fr) bt G Ivanisevic (Cro) 6–4, 6–4.

WTA GERMAN OPEN (Berlin): First rounds: A Glass (Ger) bt R McQuillan (Aus) 6–1, 0–6, 7–6; A Sugiyama (Japan) bt K Habsudova (Slovak) 6–0, 6–2; C Morariu (US) bt R Grande (It) 6–4, 6–2; B Paulus (Aut) bt C Rubin (US) 6–4, 6–2; M Shaughnessy (US) bt J Wohr (Ger) 6–3, 6–4; L Raymond (US) bt J Kandarr (Ger) 6–3, 6–3; B Schett (Aut) bt A Miller (US) 6–2, 6–2. Second round: S Cacic (US) bt Fang Li (China) 6–4, 6–4.

Baseball

AMERICAN LEAGUE: Tampa Bay 4 Cleveland 2; Minnesota 0 Baltimore 4; Texas 8 Boston 2.

NATIONAL LEAGUE: Cincinnati 1 Atlanta 8; Pittsburgh 5 Colorado 2; St Louis 7 Milwaukee 0; Houston 5 Florida 2; San Diego 2 NY Mets 1; Arizona 2 Chicago Cubs 4; San Francisco 7 Montreal 2; Los Angeles 2 Philadelphia 5.

Chess

MADRID TOURNMENT (Sp): Round One: V Anand (Ind) 1 M Adams (Eng) 0; A Belyavsky (Slo) 0 A Yermolinsky (US) 1; M Krasenkov (Pol) v P Svidler (Rus); P Leko (Hun) v J Zuniga (Paru); P San Segundo (Sp) v M Illescas (Sp) all drawn.

Cricket

THREE-DAY MATCH (second day; today 11.30): The Parks: Worcestershire 310–3 dec (D A Leatherdale 154no, G A Hick 124). Oxford Univ 162–6 (S W Byrne 69no; Rawnsley 5–72).

AON TROPHY: Castlefords: Nottinghamshire 144–9. Yorkshire 146–1 (S Widdup 67no). Yorkshire won by nine wickets. The Oval: Surrey 295–7 (J D Ratcliffe 83, J A Knott 57). Essex 283–8 (A J E Hibbert 59). Surrey won by two runs. Trentbridge: Glamorgan 285–2 (G P Butcher 95, A W Evans 93, M J Powell 67no). Somerset 283 (J I D Kerr 92, R Trotman 55; Parkin 5–45). Glamorgan won by two runs.

Ice Hockey

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP: Semi-final, first legs: Sweden 4 Switzerland 1 (Sweden lead best-of-two match series 1–0).

NHL: Second-round play-offs: Eastern Conference: Ottawa 4 Washington 3 (Washington lead series 2–1). Western Conference: Edmonton 0 Dallas 1 (ot) (Dallas lead series 2–1).

Sailing

WHITBREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE: Eighth leg: 1, Merit Cup (Mon) 1082.4 miles to finish; 2, Toshiba (US) level with leader; 3, EF Language (Swe) 25.3; 4, EF Education (Swe) 29.2; 5, Swedish Match (Swe) 57; 6, Innovation Kvaerner (Nor) 60; 7, BrunelSunergy (Neth) 67.7; 8, Silk Cut (GB) 83.2; 9, Chessie Racing (US) 91.1.

Racing

York

2.05c 1, LAMASSEE, K Fallon (9–2); 2, Crystal Falls (9–4 fav); 3, Dutchess (20–1). 13 ran ¾, ¾. (John Berry) Tote: £4.50; £1.80, £7.40. Dual F: £4.00. Trio: £84.50. CSF: £13.80. Tricast: £177.87.

2.35c 1, DAWSHAN, K Fallon (11–2 Co Fav); 2, Raffaello (9–1); 3, Carry The Flag (10–1). 11–2 co-fav Highwayman, Nautical Star 11 ran 2, 1¼. (J Eyre) Tote: £5.70; £1.80, £2.00, £1.80. Dual F: £16.00. Trio: £82.30. CSF: £51.85. Tricast: £449.83.

3.10c 1, BAHR, L Dettori (8–4); 2, Midnight Line (8–11 fav); 3, Asset (25–1). 4 ran Nk, 4. (Sacad bin Suroor) Tote: £2.40; Dual F: £1.30. CSF: £2.75.

3.40c 1, WORLD PREMIER, L Dettori (17–2); 2, Shalbrey Sky (3–1 fav); 3, The Puzzler (12–1). 13 ran Nk, 2. (C Brittain) Tote: £12.40; £2.80, £1.70, £4.50. Dual F: £19.60. Trio: £82.80. CSF: £32.36. Tricast: £305.86.

4.10c 1, PIPALONG, L Charnock (2–1 fav); 2, Miss Allsyl (9–4); 3, Lunar Procession (8–1). 8 ran Nk, 3¼. (T Easterby) Tote: £2.60; £1.30, £1.70, £1.40. Dual F: £2.70. CSF: £5.42.

4.40c 1, SIMON, D Holland (5–2); 2, Sibaya (7–2); 3, Angstrom (5–1). 4 ran ¾, 15. (M Johnston) Tote: £2.20; Dual F: £2.40. CSF: £4.75. NR: Laurentide. Rule 4 applies. deduction 30p in £.

JACKPOT: £9,761.10.

PLACEPOT: £51.80 QUADPOT: £12.40.

Hereford

1.50h 1, ISLAND SANCTUARY, R Johnson (8–11 fav); 2, Another Night (7–2); 3, Klondike Charger (16–1). 8 ran 14, 8. (D Nicholson) Tote: £1.40; £1.10, £2.40. Dual F: £1.50. CSF: £3.66.

2.20h 1, ADUAVITA, J Mages (9–2); 2, Woodrising (2–1); 3, Oat Rambler (6–4 fav). 8 ran Hd, 24. (J Moore) Tote: £5.80; £1.80, £1.10, £1.10. Dual F: £5.80. CSF: £13.28.

2.55h 1, ORCHESTRAL SUITE, Mr Richard White (10–1); 2, The Miss Captain (10–1); 3, Playback Lad (5–2). owns fav Art Prince. 7 ran 1¾, 4. (Mrs G Pidgeon). Tote: £14.70; £2.60, £4.10. Dual F: £52.70. CSF: £90.87.

3.25h 1, SPECIALIZE, R Thornton (5–2 fav); 2, Arctic Charter (6–1); 3, Charlie Chang (5–1). 14 ran 1¾, 6. (K Burke) Tote: £3.50; £1.60, £3.90, £2.00. Dual F: £25.00. Trio: £52.10. CSF: £21.07. Tricast: £76.19. NR: Cartouche, Sky Burst.

3.55h 1, COPPER COIN, C Maude (100–30 fav); 2, Bishopsgate (6–1); 3, Just Jasmine (12–1). 13 ran 2½, 4. (M Pipe) Tote: £5.10; £2.60, £2.80, £3.50. Dual F: £26.30. CSF: £35.46. Tricast: £298.12.

4.25h 1, TOM'S GEMINI STAR, Mr James Young (14–1); 2, Maypole Fountain (7–2); 3, Native Rambler (10–1). 4–8 fav Buzz O'The Crowd. 9 ran 8, 15. (O Carter) Tote: £12.30; £2.00, £2.10, £3.60. Dual F: £24.90. Trio: £121.60. CSF: £83.39.

4.55h 1, BUCK'S PALACE, Mr J Tizzard (100–30); 2, Country Beacon (10–1); 3, Ashley Mack (9–4 fav). 13 ran 2, 2¼. (P Nicholls) Tote: £6.90; £1.20, £3.40, £2.10. Dual F: £19.80. Trio: £55.40. CSF: £39.89.

5.25c 1, JOHN BUSH, Derek Byrne (4–1); 2, Nesher (7–2); 3, Speedy (5–1). 8–4 fav The Gardener. 11 ran 2¾, 10. (P Eccles) Tote: £5.80; £1.30, £2.40, £1.90. Dual F: £12.80. Trio: £23.50. CSF: £16.41. NR: Will Assume.

QUADPOT: £521.20 PLACEPOT: £405.20.

Fixtures

(7.30 unless stated)

Football

EUROPEAN CUP WINNERS CUP: Final: Chelsea v VfB Stuttgart (7.45).

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: First Division: Play-offs, semi-finals, second legs: Charlton (1) v Ipswich (0) (7.45); Sunderland (1) v Sheff Utd (2) (7.45). Second Division: Play-offs, semi-finals, second legs: Grimsby (1) v Fulham (1) (7.45); Northampton (1) v Bristol Rvrs (3)(7.45). Third Division: Play-offs, semi-finals, second legs: Colchester (0) v Barnet (1)(7.45); Torquay (3) v Scarborough (1) (7.45).

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE: Les Phillips Cup: Barnstaple Tn v Bideford.

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First Division: Luton v Wimbledon (2.0).

Rugby Union

WILLIS CORRON SHIELD: RAF v Army (7.15, Kingsholm, Gloucester).

WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier Division: Cardiff v Newport (7.15).

Rugby League

FIRST DIVISION: Dewsbury v Swinton.

ALLIANCE CHAMPIONSHIP: Halifax v Huddersfield; Sheffield v Salford.

Cricket

BRITANNIC ASSURANCE COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP (four days; 11.0): Derbys: Derbyshire v Warwickshire. Riverside: Durham v Essex. Bristol: Gloucestershire v Leicestershire. Southampton: Hampshire v Surrey. Canterbury: Kent v Lancashire. Lord's: Middlesex v Somerset. Northampton: Northamptonshire v Yorkshire. Trent Bridge: Nottinghamshire v Sussex.

OTHER MATCH (one day; 11.30): Fenner's: Cambridge University v Glamorgan.

SECOND XI CHAMPIONSHIP (three days): Chelmsford: Essex v Gloucestershire. Taunton: Somerset v Northamptonshire. The Oval: Surrey v Leicestershire. Bradford (Pk Ave): Yorkshire v Nottinghamshire.

Sport in brief

Athletics

Marion Jones, the world 100 metres champion, became the second fastest woman in history yesterday when she ran a personal best of 10.71sec in Chengdu, south-west China. The time has been bettered only by her fellow American Florence Griffith-Joyner's 10.49, a record that has stood for 10 years. The promoters had offered a million yen (£75,000) for the record.

Sailing

Grant Dalton's Merit Cup was neck and neck with Paul Standbridge's Toshiba for the lead of the eighth leg of the Whitbread Round the World Race as the wind changed from north to south, *writes Bob Fisher*. The women in EF Education overtook Gunnar Krantz's Swedish Match and Knut Frostad's Innovation Kvaerner and were fourth, only 3.9 miles astern of Paul Cayard's EF Language. The fleet is expected to reach La Rochelle on Saturday.

Hockey

A Calum Giles hat-trick and goals from Jason Lee and Russell Garcia, from a corner, hailed England out against New Zealand at Milton Keynes last night, *writes Pat Rowley*. Ken Robinson's double had put the Kiwis in front and a Jamie Smith penalty briefly tied it up at 3–3.

Rugby League

Wigan's three-quarter Mark Bell is out of Friday night's Super League match at Leeds with a groin injury, *writes Andy Wilson*. Lee Gilmour comes in on the wing. Andy Farrell will be available after being cleared by the game's executive committee over an alleged high tackle at Sheffield last Saturday.

Cricket
News and Scores
0930 16 13 +

Counties update

Derbyshire	24	Middlesex	33
Durham	25	Northants.	34
Essex	26	Nottingham	35
Glamorgan	27	Somerset	36
Glouc.	28	Surrey	37
Hampshire	29	Sussex	38
Kent	30	Warwicks.	39
Lancs	31	Worcester	40
Leics.	32	Yorkshire	41

Complete county scores
0930 16 13 23

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The Guardian INTERACTIVE

Cole drops from England reckoning, page 14

Bahr boosts her Oaks credentials, page 13

Chelsea poised for final heave, page 14

Sampras turns on the Rome heat, page 15

SportsGuardian

Shearer is in the clear

Michael Walker sees the FA accept that the England captain's kicking of Neil Lennon was a 'genuine attempt to free himself'

TO NO one's great surprise, Glenn Hoddle, Kenny Dalglish and Alan Shearer all had their wish for a speedy resolution to the Football Association's inquiry into the Shearer/Neil Lennon head-kicking incident granted yesterday.

At a FA hearing at Hillsborough, Shearer's case was "not proven", and the timing of the verdict means he will play for Newcastle United in Saturday's FA Cup final and to lead Hoddle's England team in the World Cup without the threat of FA censure hanging over him.

He had not been charged with misconduct — last Wednesday's FA statement referred to "an alleged breach of the rules" — but with Lennon in Sheffield as a witness on his behalf the three-man FA commission concluded that when his left boot connected with Lennon's face in Newcastle's Premiership fixture at Filbert Street a fortnight ago it was during his "genuine attempt to free himself".

Television replays showed clearly a strong contact between Shearer's boot and Lennon's head but the match referee Martin Bodenham neither booked Shearer nor awarded a free-kick against him.

Bodenham was at Hillsborough yesterday, as was one of the assistant referees from Filbert Street, Alan Kaye. Shearer was represented by the PFA chief executive Gordon Taylor.

Last night the striker said: "I am delighted to have cleared my name and can look forward to Saturday's Cup final and to the World Cup countdown, which starts next Monday.

"I would like to thank the PFA for representing me and also Neil Lennon for giving evidence on my behalf.

"I spoke to Gordon Taylor about this for the first time after last Sunday's game at Blackburn and was convinced that with his sense of integrity and fairness he was the right man to put my case. I am pleased to put the record straight."

The FA said: "In reaching its decision the commission accepted that the incident was initially caused by Neil Lennon pulling at the shirt of Alan Shearer, turning round and trapping his leg." Lennon, telephoned by Shearer on Monday, presumably confirmed that impression and added: "I'm glad that it's over and done with."

Dalglish, like Hoddle, had called for a swift judgment, the Newcastle manager saying: "It means that Alan has been vindicated. I can't understand why it had to go this far in the first place, but it is done now and he can concentrate on the FA Cup final.

"It proves that the good guy has been vindicated."

That may not be a view shared throughout the country, but the FA will at least be glad to have been seen trying to treat every footballer equally.



Shearer . . . delighted and looking forward

Lord Knit in need of an image maker



Paul Weaver

IT WAS Napoleon who described England as a nation of shopkeepers but he failed to explain what befalls said shoppy when he closes the order book, puts down his stubby pencil and steps out from behind the counter.

Well, I'm quite happy to pick up Bonaparte's baton where he dropped it — at Leipzig or Waterloo probably — and complete his profound observation: England is a nation of shopkeepers who fall flat on their faces when they attempt to do anything else.

At the moment it is difficult to assess just who is making the bigger pig's ear of things: Archie Norman, a vice-chairman of the Tory party who used to be at Asda, or Lord MacLaurin of Knebworth, formerly with Tesco.

Now, I'm sure MacLaurin was a dab hand when it came to stocking shelves and slicing bacon, and handing back jingly stuff for folding stuff, but he is less impressive as chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board. You really want to take him back to Lord's and ask for another one. But they only do that in shops. Sometimes.

At a Professional Cricketers' Association meeting at Edgbaston on Monday about 90 per cent of the players voted in favour of a two-division county championship, a hardening of autumn's two-thirds majority.

Most counties are really in favour of two divisions, despite their 11-7 vote against last year. We will have two divisions. As sure as eggs are eggs. It may not be the hoped-for panacea for England's ills but it will surely have its chance.

Even MacLaurin, bless him, is in favour, which gives me reservations about the whole idea. So why do we not have two divisions?

Because of MacLaurin of course, or Lord Knit of Knebworth as I heard him described in one county's committee-room recently.

If MacLaurin had campaigned for it when he entered office on a tidal wave of enthusiasm and goodwill, staking his own position and reputation on the outcome, he would have carried the day.

Only a few counties were seriously against it then. But they outwitted MacLaurin in getting at the floating voters, whom he could so easily have won over with a few assurances, particularly concerning the financial security of second-division clubs.

Instead, he gave us last year's biggest belly-laugh. He gave us, at the centrepiece of his otherwise interesting

BEFORE England went to play against West Indies last winter, MacLaurin supported the notion that Michael Atherton should keep his job as captain.

If Atherton, a decent chap but a proven poor captain of an admittedly mediocre side, had gone last year, as he should have, we would now be better informed over who should lead in Australia next winter.

For now Alec Stewart, a solid but hardly inspired choice, has got the Big One. Meanwhile MacLaurin, whose one notable achievement has been to dupe one or two commentators into believing that he really was the instrument of radical change, is stressing the importance of image. "Image is crucial," he said about Stewart's appointment.

Well, I'm sorry that image is so crucial, Knebworth, because you've got a rotten one. Away from the tills and the trolley-baskets.

Dawson chosen to lead raw squad

Drop-outs come under fire

Youth to the fore in England's depleted tour party, reports **Robert Armstrong**

CLIVE WOODWARD yesterday criticised international players who continue to play for their clubs while carrying injuries which have ruled them out of the forthcoming rugby tour to the southern hemisphere. After announcing a much-changed 37-man squad, the biggest England have ever taken on tour, he expressed deep disappointment over the unprecedented withdrawal of a dozen Test players.

"It does concern me that players go on playing for their clubs when they're injured," said the England coach, who has appointed Northampton's Matt Dawson as captain for the tour of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa because Lawrence Dallaglio needs to rest his injured shoulder.

Dawson, naturally, was upbeat about the squad's prospects. "We have every chance of winning Tests," said the scrum-half who last summer scored the winning try for the Lions in the first Test against South Africa at Newlands, the ground where England face the world champions in July.

"I cannot help but relive a great experience," he added, "but that will be our last Test and we will have been through a lot before then."

Dawson, 25, spent three months in New Zealand in 1992 playing club rugby and knows that England's younger players will have to mature quickly to cope with the intensity of the All Blacks. "If they cannot grow up they will be found out," he said.

Woodward, meanwhile, stated a clear view on a cloudy issue: "I feel for those who have to turn out for their clubs, because they could lose their jobs if they don't. Nevertheless I wish players would give England priority, resting when necessary."



Together we stand . . . England's captain Matt Dawson, left, with the coach Clive Woodward after the 37-man squad was named yesterday FRANK BARON

He excluded Dallaglio, who played for Wasps in last Saturday's cup final defeat by Saracens, from his strictures — "there is no criticism of Lawrence, he'll be welcome back" — but his attitude to Martin Johnson, who misses the tour because of a groin injury, was different. "I'm disappointed Martin has been playing for Leicester in games in which there is nothing to play for," he said.

Apart from Dallaglio and Johnson, the list of high-profile casualties includes Kyran Bracken, Jason Leonard, Tim Rodber, Richard Hill, Mike Catt, David Rees and Tony Underwood. Jeremy Guscott and Phil de Glanville have decided to spend more time with their families and Paul Grayson will be with his wife when she gives birth to their first child next month.

Grayson, the Northampton and England fly-half, may yet fly to New Zealand in time for the two Tests against the All Blacks scheduled for June 20 and 27. Woodward has obtained the Rugby Football Union's permission to select one more player at any stage of the tour in the event of early injuries to key players.

"It's no good moaning," said Woodward. "If we return home with four or five new guys having made an unanswerable case for an England place, then the exercise will have been worthwhile."

He stuck to his policy of giving youth a chance, promoting emerging talents such as the 19-year-old Saracens flanker Ben Sturnham and the Richmond wings Spencer Brown and Dominic Chapman. There are also places for newcomers virtually unknown outside their clubs: Josh Lewsey, a 21-year-old Bristol full-back; Duncan Bell, the 23-year-old Sale prop; and Lewis Moody, the 19-year-old Leicester flanker.

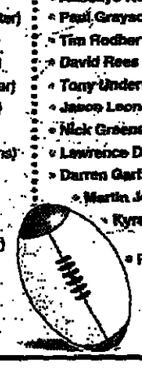
Woodward remains confident that natural leaders will emerge to give England a winning chance in their Tests against Australia, New Zealand (twice) and South Africa. Apart from Dawson, England have a nucleus of experienced internationals, especially among the forwards who include Ben Clarke, Steve Ojomoh, Graham Rowntree, Neil Back and Garath Archer.

Dean Ryan, Darren Garforth and Dorian West, all capped this season, have been left out mainly because Woodward believes their skills are not tailored to the quick, flexible style he wants. Ryan's omission is bound to raise eyebrows in view of his compelling leadership as Newcastle's No. 8 and captain, though his age, 32, would count against him as a prospect for next year's World Cup.

The England coach has already laid plans for a one-month training camp plus matches in South Africa next summer, possibly near Durban, as part of England's World Cup build-up. How many of the current squad will still be in favour is anyone's guess: for the moment each of the 18 uncapped players Woodward has chosen can dream of making his Test debut against Australia in Brisbane on June 6. The coach's new-look line-up will be announced shortly before the party depart on May 27.

England's southern hemisphere tour squad

Backs	Forwards	The Unavailable XV
Tim Stimpson (Newcastle)	Darren Crompton (Richmond)	Jeremy Guscott (Bath)
Matt Perry (Bath)	Will Green (Wasps)	Phil de Glanville (Bath)
Austin Healey (Leicester)	Duncan Bell (Sale)	Mike Catt (Bath)
Matt Moore (Sale)	Phil Vickery (Gloucester)	Adedayo Adebayo (Bath)
Nick Beal (Northampton)	Graham Rowntree (Leicester)	Paul Grayson (Northampton)
Tom Beim (Sale)	George Chuter (Saracens)	Tim Rodber (Northampton)
Spencer Brown (Richmond)	Phil Greening (Gloucester)	David Rees (Sale)
Dominic Chapman (Richmond)	Richard Cockerill (Leicester)	Tony Underwood (Newcastle)
Steve Ravenscroft (Saracens)	Garath Archer (Newcastle)	Jason Leonard (Harlequins)
Stuart Potter (Leicester)	Rob Fidler (Gloucester)	Nick Greenstock (Wasps)
Jon Wilkinson (Newcastle)	Danny Grewcock (Saracens)	Lawrence Dallaglio (Wasps)
Joe Bextendell (Sale)	Simon Shaw (Wasps)	Darren Garforth (Leicester)
Will Greenwood (Leicester)	Ben Sturnham (Saracens)	Martin Johnson (Leicester)
Alex King (Wasps)	Lewis Moody (Leicester)	Kyran Bracken (Saracens)
Josh Lewsey (Bristol)	Steve Ojomoh (Gloucester)	Richard Hill (Saracens)
Matt Dawson (Northampton, capt)	Ben Clarke (Richmond)	
Scott Benton (Gloucester)	Pat Sanderson (Sale)	
Peter Richards (London Irish)	Tony Diprose (Saracens)	
	Neil Back (Leicester).	



Angry Australia want England punished for selection 'insult'

Robert Kitson

DETAILS of Clive Woodward's callow squad had barely landed before the Australian Rugby Union accused England of an "insulting" selection and called for sanctions.

Dick McGruther, the ARU chairman, said he would recommend to the International Board in Dublin next week that England be stripped of the right to host a pool at next year's World Cup as punishment for choosing "probably the most under-equipped group of Englishmen sent to Australia since the First Fleet".

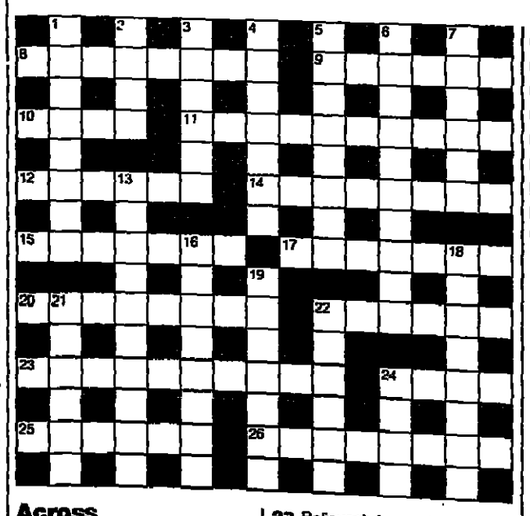
He added: "We are disappointed and insulted. It is stretching the imagination to think they have to pick 17 uncapped players. This is the biggest sell-out by the English since Gallipoli."

McGruther's outburst reflects the southern hemisphere belief that English clubs are withholding players from international duty. It is not worth suggesting in Sydney at the moment that Woodward's squad might contain some World Cup contenders.

There is no question of the ARU cancelling the Test in Brisbane on June 6. McGruther also ruled out sending a weakened Wallabies side to Twickenham in November as retribution, but strong words loudly spoken can be expected in Dublin. "You have to wonder whether this mob deserves to host a World Cup pool," he said.

Guardian Crossword No 21,273

Set by Pasquale



Across

8,2 Girl, modish with a heavenly body, rendering song (8,4)
9 Mostly absent from home, little man! Become alert (6)
10 Haughty one in forefront (4)
11 Scare, say, about some psychological impulses (10)
12 Farewell given by Athenian statesman to Head of Government (2,4)
14 Surpass effort made by Social Services (8)
15 Showing craft outside gallery in August (7)
17 Lad without yen to meet yob in town (7)
20 Voracious female with long hair, goddess by river (3-5)
22 Trusted guide helps fellows reach Dartmoor landmark (6)
23 Believer brings out new edition of Shinto tome (10)
24 Front of boat attached to front of large vessel (4)
25 Series of lies in the paper? (6)
26 Floor — no relets — after refurbishment (8)

Down

1 Dag as an idle pleasure-seeker? (8)
2 See 8
3 Keeping in cupboard to get publicity? (6)
4 Pig disfigured by a growth (7)
5 Small tree friend encountered on first half of tour (8)
6 Who'd mend an awful garment for passing on? (4-2-4)
7 Sprightliness and twitchy motion promoting digestion (6)
13 Roof may be free (2,3,5)
16 Like children temporarily without a parent — they lack pop (8)
18 Where you may find bookies offering favourable deal? (8)
19 Vehicle that will bring folk back to the fleapit? (7)
21 A fellow, I, with the ultimate in handsomeness? (6)
22 Transform union after upset within clutches of comrade (6)
24 What gale did in unseasonable weather (4)

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ABFPRST

No matter how bad the films, you have to give something to the French.

Derek Malcolm has some tips for Cannes jurors

G2 page 8

صكذا من الاصل